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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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NEET sanctity breached: SC to take a call on re-test

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Observing that the sanctity of NEET-UG 2024 has been "breached", Supreme Court on Monday said a re-test may be ordered if the entirety of the process is affected and sought details from National Testing Agency and CBI including the timing and manner of the paper leak, besides the numbers of wrongdoers, to know the extent of its effect.

"Let us not be in self-denial. Self-denial is only adding to the problem," a bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud told Centre and NTA, which conducts the prestigious test, in a string of strongly-worded observations.

"One thing which is very clear is that the leak has taken place. That the sanctity of the exam has been breached is beyond doubt. The question is how widespread is the leak," said the bench which also comprised Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra.

Posing a volley of searching queries, the bench said a re-test has to be ordered if the breach in sanctity affects the entirety of the process.

Supreme Court PHOTO: PTI

The court said if the sanctity of NEET-UG 2024 is "lost" and if the leak of its question paper has been propagated through social media, then a re-test has to be ordered.

It said the extent of question paper leak and the beneficiaries across geographical boundaries have to be ascertained before the top court may order a re-test in the controversy-ridden exam. The bench was hearing over 30 pleas related to the NEET-UG 2024 including those alleging irregularities and malpractices and seeking a direction to conduct it afresh.

It said if the question paper leak was taking place through Telegram, WhatsApp and electronic means, then "it spreads like wildfire".

"There is no question that leak of question paper has taken place. It said there were certain "red flags" as 67 candidates had scored 720 out of 720.

The pleas will be taken up on 11 July.

1 arrested in case leak

CBI has arrested a person over alleged "manipulation" in the NEET-UG examination in Mahrashtra Latur's. This takes the total number of arrests by the agency to nine, officials said. CBI took into custody Nanjunethappa G as it is alleged that two government school teachers in Latur had demanded over Rs 5 lakh from NEET-UG aspirants to ensure their success in the examination, they said.. *—PTI*

With security in focus, Modi lands in Russia

Indians seek Modi's support to build temple

MOSCOW, 8 JULY

In his first trip since the start of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday travelled to Russia to hold summit talks with President Vladimir Putin. The visit is being seen as having a wider geopolitical context and signalling.

The Indian community in Russia will be seeking Modi's support to build a Hindu temple in the country, a new Indian school building and the availability of more direct flights to India.

Shortly after landing in Moscow, Modi said he is looking forward to deepening bilateral partnership in futuristic areas and that stronger ties between India and Russia will "greatly benefit our people". India seeks to play a "supportive role" for a peaceful and stable region, Modi said in his departure statement.

Modi was received at the Vnukovo-II airport by Russia's First Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi receives a guard of honour upon his arrival at the airport, in Moscow, Russia, on Monday PHOTO: PTI

Manturov had received Chinese President Xi Jinping during his visit to Russia as well. On Tuesday, Modi will co-chair the 22nd India-Russia annual summit with President Putin, interact with the members of the Indian community and visit the Rosatom pavilion at an exhibition.

The focus of the 22nd India-Russia annual summit is likely to be boosting bilateral cooperation in the areas of energy, security, trade, investment and people-to-people exchanges. The Ukraine conflict is set to figure in the discussions.

In the talks, Modi is expected to urge the Russian side to end recruitment of Indians as support staff to the Russian military and ensure the return of those still operating in the force. It is Modi's first trip to Russia since his third term as the prime minister. *—PTI*

RaGa visits Manipur, urges PM to come too

Rahul also met Assam flood victims in camps

IMPHAL, 8 JULY

Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Monday requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit the ethnic violence-affected Manipur to give solace to the people.

Rahul also visited flood-hit Assam and met affected people at the relief camps. Describing what has happened in Manipur as a "tremendous tragedy", Gandhi also said that Congress is ready to do everything it can to bring peace to the state.

Ethnic violence between Meitei and Kuki communities since May last year claimed more than 200 lives in Manipur. During his day-long visit to Manipur, Gandhi visited several relief camps where people displaced by the ethnic violence in the northeastern state are staying. "This is the third time I come here since the problem started. It has been a tremendous tragedy. I was expecting some improvement in the situation. But I was quite disappointed to see that the situation is still nowhere near where it should be," he said. Gandhi said he came to the state to listen to the woes of the violence-hit people and build confidence in them and as an Opposition leader, he would pressure the government so that it acts. "I want to tell all the people of Manipur (that) I came here as your brother, as somebody who wants to help you, wants to work with you to bring back peace in Manipur," he said. Stating that he had never seen anywhere in India what is going on in Manipur, Gandhi asserted that violence and hatred are not going to get any solution, while respect and interaction can.

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi during his visit to Churachandpur relief camp, in Manipur, on Monday PHOTO: PTI

"Indian government and everybody who considers himself a patriot must embrace the people of Manipur," said the Congress leader who also met Governor Anusuiya Uikey before holding the press conference. *—PTI*

Ex-minister BC Patil's son-in-law ends life

BENGALURU, 8 JULY

Former minister and BJP leader BC Patil's son-in-law Pratap Kumar KG allegedly committed suicide by consuming poison in his car near a forest at Arakere in Honnali taluk of Davanagere district on Monday. Pratap parked his car near the forest on Harihara-Shivamogga highway, according to preliminary police investigations. The 41-year-old consumed the poison and soon after called his family informing them of his act. Local residents noticed Pratap around 3.30pm and transported him to a hospital in Honnali. He was later moved to McGann District Hospital in Shivamogga, where he succumbed to the poison's effects. While a bottle of poison was found in the vehicle, no suicide note was discovered.

Pratap, a resident of Kattalagere village in Davangere and was managing family's agriculture business, was married to Sowmya, Patil's eldest daughter, for 15 years.

—Salar News

If you need emotional support, please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777.

Heavy rains pound Mumbai, 50 flights cancelled

MUMBAI, 8 JULY

Flight services at the Mumbai airport were severely impacted on Monday with runway operations shut for over an hour and 50 flights cancelled due to low visibility after heavy rains in the city. Of the 50 cancelled flights (both arrivals and departures), 42 services were of the no-frills IndiGo and six of Air India. The government-owned Alliance Air also had to cancel two (one departure and one arrival) of its flights on Monday. *—PTI* *>>>More on Page 4*

Candidates allege errors in CUET-UG answer keys

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Several candidates, who appeared for the Common University Entrance Test on Monday alleged the responses in the answer keys announced by the NTA are incorrect. The claims came a day after the NTA announced the answer keys. The agency also said it will conduct a retest for CUET-UG candidates from 15-19 July if any grievance raised by them about the conduct of the exam is found correct. The candidates can now challenge the answers online till 5 pm on 9 July. *—PTI*

Terrorist ambush in Kathua claims lives of 4 soldiers

KATHUA/JAMMU, 8 JULY

Four army personnel were killed and six injured on Monday when terrorists ambushed their vehicle in the remote Machedi area of Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, officials said.The terrorists hurled a grenade and opened fire targeting Army vehicles which were on a routine patrol on the Machedi-Kindli-Malhar road at around 3.30 pm near Badnota village in Lohai Malhar, 150 km from Kathua town.

Security forces retaliated but the terrorists fled into the nearby forest, the officials said, adding an intermittent exchange of firing was going on between the terrorists and security forces when the last reports were received.

They said reinforcements have been rushed to the area to neutralise the terrorists, who are believed to have recently infiltrated from across the border and were moving to the higher reaches.

PHOTO: PTI

This was the second major incident in Kathua district in the past four weeks.

On 12 and 13 June, two terrorists and a CRPF jawan were killed in a fierce gunfight during a search and cordon operation. The terror attack comes within a fortnight of a gunfight between terrorists and security forces in the Gandoh area of Doda district that left three foreign terrorists dead on 26 June. *—PTI*

Dakshina Kannada on red alert amid heavy rains

MANGALURU /UDUPI/ SIRSI, 8 JULY

The Dakshina Kannada district administration has issued a 'red alert' for Tuesday with the Met department predicting heavy rainfall. Schools and colleges would remain closed on Tuesday, it said.

In the wake of heavy rain, the administration issued an advisory calling for wider restraint on public movement and sea coast activities, including fishing or visiting beaches.

According to the advisory, the district administration has advised fishermen not to venture into the sea for fishing. Normal life was disrupted in the coastal and western ghat districts of Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Uttara Kannada following heavy to very heavy and incessant rains in the last 36 hours, officials said on Monday. As a result of 'excess rains', many low-lying areas in the undivided Dakshina Kannada (including Udupi) have been flooded. Buntwal town experienced inundation in the lower parts of the town situated nearer to the riverfront.

In Uttara Kannada, 10,600 cusec water was released from the four gates of the Kadra reservoir of Kali river on Monday, as the water level crossed the danger threshold. *—PTI*

FREE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS POLICY IN WORK: SC TOLD

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

The national policy on distribution of menstrual hygiene products to adolescent school-going girls is at an advanced stage of formulation, the Centre told Supreme Court on Monday.

A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice JB Pardiwala took note of the submissions of Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre, and allowed her plea for grant of two more months for framing of the policy.

The top court was hearing a plea of Congress leader and social activist Jaya Thakur seeking directions to the Centre and the states to provide free sanitary pads to girl students of class 6-12 and ensure separate female toilet facilities in all government-aided and residential schools. *—PTI*

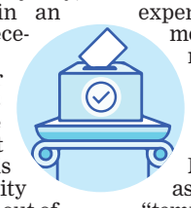
With split votes, French Parl Hung

PARIS, 8 JULY

Election results show French voters have chosen to give a broad leftist coalition the most Parliamentary seats in pivotal legislative elections, keeping the far-Right away from power. Yet no party won an outright majority, putting France in an uncertain, unprecedented situation.

Three major political blocs emerged from the elections — yet none of them is close to the majority of at least 289 seats out of 577. President Emmanuel Macron's centrist alliance arrived in second position and the far right in third — still drastically increasing the number of seats it holds in the National Assembly, France's lower house of parliament.

No clear figure has emerged as a possible future Prime Minister. Macron says he will wait to decide his next steps, and heads to Washington this week for a NATO summit. The new legislators can start work in parliament on Monday, and their first new session starts 18 July.



While not uncommon in other European countries, modern France has never experienced a parliament with no dominant party. Prime Minister Gabriel Attal offered his resignation on Monday but Macron instead asked him to remain "temporarily" as head of the government after the chaotic election results left the government in limbo.

Macron may seek a deal with the moderate left to create a joint government. Such negotiations, if they happen, are expected to be very difficult because France has no tradition of this arrangement. *—AP*

>>>More on Page 6

BIHAR: 12 DEAD IN LIGHTNING STRIKES ACROSS 7 DISTRICTS

PATNA, 8 JULY

Twelve more people have been killed in lightning strikes in seven districts of Bihar, officials said on Monday.

With the fresh fatalities, over 40 people have lost their lives to lightning strikes in various districts of Bihar in the last 10 days, including 22 in the last 48 hours.

The 12 fresh fatalities were reported in the last 24 hours, while 10 deaths were reported in the preceding 24 hours, they said.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar expressed condolences over the deaths of the 12 people and announced an ex-gratia of Rs 4 lakh each to the next of kin of the deceased. He appealed to the people to remain alert and vigilant and stay indoors during thunderstorms.

Jamui and Kaimur reported three deaths each, followed by two in Rohtas and one each in Saharsa, Saran, Bhojpur, Gopalganj. *—PTI*

MONTHS WARMER BY 1.5 ºC

June hottest on record, beats 2023 high

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

With millions of people across five continents experiencing scorching heat last month, the European Union's (EU) climate agency, Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), confirmed on Monday that June was the warmest on record.

It also marked the 12th consecutive month of global temperatures reaching 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial average.

According to new data, June 2024 was the warmest on record, with an average surface air temperature of 16.66 degrees Celsius, 0.67 degrees Celsius above the 1991-2020 average for the month and 0.14 degrees Celsius above the previous high set in June 2023.

PHOTO: PTI

The world's sea surface in June was also the highest ever recorded for the month.

Several countries experienced record-breaking heat and devastating floods and storms in June.

According to an analysis by Climate Central, an independent group of scientists and communicators based in the United States, more than 60 per cent of the world population faced extreme heat that was made at least three times more likely by climate change during 16-24 June.

According to IMD, northwest India recorded its warmest June since 1901. India, which experienced one of its hottest and longest heatwaves, recorded more than 40,000 suspected heatstroke cases and over 100 heat-related deaths. The intense heat overwhelmed the water supply system and power grids, with Delhi grappling with a severe water crisis. According to the IMD, 11 states recorded 20 to 38 heatwave days. *—PTI*

CRIME BEAT

Yadgir minor throws baby into well, arrested

BENGALURU, 8 JULY

Yadgir police on Monday arrested a minor who threw her neighbour's 3-month old baby into a well on 6 June. According to police, the minor girl threw the baby after the baby's paternal uncle refused her love proposal. The deceased Meenakshi, was the daughter of Nagesh and Chittemma, residents of Ambedkar Layout in Yadgir District. The accused minor lived in a neighboring house and had developed feelings for the baby's paternal uncle, Yallappa. Initially, the Yadgir police registered a missing complaint for the baby and started interrogating close family members and neighbours. The police found baby's dead body in a well during seach operation the next day. Upon further questioning, the police detained the minor girl. ***—Salar News***

Nursing college student dies by suicide in City

BENGALURU, 8 JULY

A nursing student from Mother Theresa College died by suicide in her hostel room in the City, police said on Monday. The body has been shifted for post-mortem. Police said the deceased, Divya Mandol from West Bengal, had not left a suicide note. It is suspected that the suicide happened due to Divya's family issues. She had committed suicide on Friday but was discovered on Sunday by her friends, police said. In a separate case, a 20-year-old student was found dead in her hostel after she allegedly lost money in cybercrime three weeks ago. In another case a law student in the National Law School of India, Bengaluru died by suicide due to depression. The students or their loved ones who see signs can contact the helpline number 7676602602, Parivarthan counselling helpline services, Bengaluru. ***— Salar News***

Was not aware of liquor party, says MP Sudhakar

DyCM demands answers from BJP's Nadda on the issue

BENGALURU, 8 JULY

Chikkaballapur BJP MP and former minister K Sudhakar, on Monday clarified that he was unaware of who distributed liquor at the thanksgiving event organised for the Nelamangala voters in Bengaluru rural district on Sunday.

Speaking to the reporters, he said, "I was invited to the meeting by the party local unit. I returned along with the State leaders after the event. I was not aware about the liquor distribution."

"Taluk BJP and JD(S) workers had organised the event and they had invited me and Leader of Opposition Ashoka. We came out after attending the meeting. Whatever happened after the event, I came to know through the media," he said.

Sudhakar further said in his political career spanning over two decades he has never indulged in booze distribution to garner votes or to thank the voters.

He said that previously he has made his stand clear on liquor distribution by political parties and has always opposed the practice.

On Sunday, videos from the event surfaced showing liquor packets and bottles being distributed, prompting long queues as attendees collected their drinks under the watch of police personnel.

Congress leaders and supporters protest against Chikkaballapur MP K Sudhakar in Bengaluru on Monday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

The footage quickly went viral on social media, drawing immediate backlash from the Opposition party.

Reacting to the incident, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar demanded "answers" from BJP President JP Nadda on the issue.

"I don't want local (BJP) leaders to reply to it. I want the BJP national President to reply to it. It is the culture of the BJP," he told reporters here.

However, BJP workers claim that in a letter to the local police on 3 July, BJP Nelamangala President Jagadish Chaudhary had mentioned that the event would include "food and liquor". The permission was sought from the Excise Department.

Speaking to **Salar News**, Excise Department Commissioner J Ravishankar said, "Everyone is quoting that the Excise department has given permission but we never issued permission for the party. I have spoken to the Deputy Commissioner and he said the permission was given for one day."

PHOTO: PTI

Taluk BJP and JD(S) workers had organised the event and they had invited me and Leader of Opposition Ashoka

-K Sudhakar, BJP MP and former minister

Meanwhile, the Karnataka Youth Congress Committee staged a protest on Monday noting that the BJP culture has been exposed to the terrible culture of the BJP party, and the background of misusing the saffron flag. *—Salar News with Agencies*

'NO COVER UP'

Parameshwara rules out SIT probe in MUDA land scam

BENGALURU, 8 JULY

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara on Monday rubbished allegations that the government was trying to cover up the alleged fraudulent allotment of compensatory sites to land losers, including Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi, by Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA).

Ruling out a Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe into the alleged scam, he noted that Chief Minister has already clarified on the matter. "We will not cover up anything, ours (government) is like an open book. There is no need to cover up anything in it. Chief Minister has clarified, we need not speak about it repeatedly," Parameshwara said in response to a question on whether the government is conspiring to cover up the scam. Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries HD Kumaraswamy last week took an indirect swipe at Deputy Chief Minister and State Congress chief DK Shivakumar stating that the MUDA site allotment scam was exposed by a "person who is eyeing the Chief Minister's post". Reacting to this, Parameshwara said: "Regarding what Kumaraswamy has said, I don't have any information."

G Parameshwara ***PHOTO: PTI***

Asked if the government will form an SIT to probe the case, he said, "No. There is no need for it. The Chief Minister has given the clarification. What is the need to inquire?". *—ANI*

PM Vishwakarma applicants to soon get calls

BENGALURU, 8 JULY

The link workers in Bengaluru have been assigned the applications of the PM Vishwakarma scheme applicants and they will start contacting the applicants for identification.

The link workers who also conduct surveys and research to bridge gaps between the citizens and the government are currently given this responsibility in addition to the surveys they conduct to track dengue fever.

The BBMP joint commissioner of solid waste management, Prathiba R addressed the link workers on Monday at a meeting held in Puttanachappa Purabhavan, Town hall and explained them about the scheme and distributed 300 applications to each person out of a total of 1.60 lakh applications.

The link workers were asked to contact and identify the applicants. Once the identification is done,the link workers will start visiting the applicant for field verification. Also, the addresses of the beneficiaries will be given to the junior health inspectors.

Furthermore she made a clear announcement that any misinformation or lack of commitment to the job would cause the link workers their jobs.

Meanwhile, the Vishwakarmas are still doubtful of the benefits they will get and many of them are not aware of what needs to be done with regards to the scheme.

They are hopeful and are in need of awareness and education of benefits that are received from the

—Salar News

HEALTH CRISIS

Vrishabhavathi river turns into a drain near Bapujinagar on Mysuru Road, Bengaluru, posing a major health risk ***PHOTO: SALAR***

'No need to declare dengue medical emergency yet'

BENGALURU, 8 JULY

Dinesh Gundu Rao ***PHOTO: X/@DINESHGRAO***

Karnataka Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao on Monday said that there is no need to declare dengue as a "medical emergency" in the state

His reaction comes a day after suggestions made by the Opposition BJP. He said, amid a spike in dengue cases, officials have been issued directions to take all preventive measures.

On Sunday, Leader of Opposition in Assembly R Ashoka, eminent cardiologist and Bengaluru Rural BJP MP Dr C N Manjunath had urged that the Congress government declare dengue as a "medical emergency", and called for more efforts to control its spread. "We have held separate meetings with CEOs of Zilla Panchayats from all districts and the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP). Instructions have been given to spray medicines at places where mosquitoes germinate and spread more awareness among the public," Rao said.

He said as there are many active dengue cases in the state, the number of tests being conducted has been increased and arrangements have been made for treatment.

Also, there are a couple of Zika virus positive cases.

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met on Sunday in the backdrop of advice from Opposition leaders and others to declare dengue as a medical emergency, the Minister said. Meanwhile, government issued a directive mandating all gram panchayats to implement protocols to manage dengue cases, with specific emphasis on ensuring regular cleaning of water storage tanks, open reservoirs, and public toilets to maintain sanitation standards. Minister of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Priyank Kharge advised gram panchayats to establish "Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Committees" to actively promote dengue control initiatives. He also directed them to adopt precautionary measures promptly. *—PTI*

Chargesheet against Darshan after proof: HM

BENGALURU, 8 JULY

A chargesheet in the Renukaswamy murder case, in which Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa, his friend Pavithra Gowda and 15 others are accused, would be filed after gathering sufficient evidence, Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara said on Monday.

All the accused are currently under judicial custody till 18 July. According to police sources, 33-year-old Renukaswamy, a fan of the actor, had sent obscene messages to Gowda, which enraged Darshan, allegedly leading to his murder. His body was found near a stormwater drain next to an apartment in Sumanahalli here on 9 June.

"Accused have been arrested, investigation is on, evidence is being collected, after that chargesheet will be filed. Can it be fast forwarded just because the media says?" Parameshwara told reporters in response to a question.

Raghavendra, one of the accused who is part of Darshan's fan club in Chitradurga, had brought Renukaswamy to a shed in RR Nagar here, on the pretext that the actor wanted to meet him. It was in this shed that he was allegedly tortured and murdered on 8 June.

According to the post-mortem report, Renukaswamy, a native of Chitradurga, died due to shock and haemorrhage as a result of multiple blunt injuries.

Police sources said Pavithra, who is accused number one, was the "major cause" for Renukaswamy's murder, claiming that it has been proved from the probe that she instigated other accused, conspired with them, and took part in the crime. *—PTI*

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Monday ***PHOTO: SALAR***

Govt land encroachments survey from August: CM

BENGALURU, 8 JULY

Chief Minister Siddaramiah issued the order to the State Deputy Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer to begin the survey of the lands which are protected under the Landbeat mobile software and clear the encroachments in the State.

Speaking at the Meeting of Deputy Commissioners and Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officers, Siddaramiah said, "Out of 1.40 crore acres of government land in the State, 10.78 lakh acres of lands have been inspected, 14.32 lakh acre have been notified for site inspection and 91,000 acres of lands have been identified as stressed. The officials will survey to check encroachments and start their inspection from August and provide me with the survey list to me and the State Revenue Minister."

Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda highlighted that 370 officials are slated to be appointed in the Revenue Department for this purpose.

The revenue minister said, "Once the encroachment details survey is produced the tahsildar is required to take further action within 15 days. The government will take disciplinary action against the tahsildar if he fails to act within the stipulated time." In response to the dengue fever and cholera outbreak in the State, with confirmed cases linked to contaminated water, Siddaramaiah has ordered to test the drinking water across the State every 15 days. *—Salar News*

- Revenue Minister said that 370 officials are slated to be appointed in the Revenue Department for the survey.n response to the dengue fever and cholera outbreak in the State, with confirmed cases linked to contaminated water, Siddaramaiah has ordered to test the drinking water across the State every 15 days

Once encroachment details survey is produced tahsildar is required to take further action within 15 days. Government will take action if he fails to act within the stipulated time.

-Krishna Byre Gowda, Revenue Minister

CM asks officials to cancel ineligible BPL cards

BENGALURU, 8 JULY

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday directed officials to cancel 'Below Poverty Line' (BPL) ration cards held by those ineligible, pointing out that 80 per cent of the state's population have them.

As per the NITI Aayog, the percentage of people below the poverty line in the state should be lesser, he said, adding the BPL cards should be provided only to those who are eligible.

"Eighty per cent of the state's population has BPL cards, compared to 40 per cent in Tamil Nadu. According to NITI Aayog, the percentage of people below the poverty line in the state should be lesser. But we have given BPL cards to 1.27 crore families in the state. Ineligible BPL cards should be cancelled and BPL cards should be provided to only those who are eligible," Siddaramaiah said.

Amid a spike in dengue cases, he asked officials to work for its control on a war-footing, and directed DCs and District Health Officers (DHOs) to hold regular meetings with taluk-level officials and work expeditiously.

Stating that development and progress are not possible if the Deputy Commissioners assume that they are "Maharajas," the Chief Minister instructed both politicians and officers to remember that they are public servants and must serve people. *—PTI*

CRY FOR HELP

State has just 2 burns units for 13 crore people

KASHMIRA DUTTA
BENGALURU, 8 JULY

For a population of at least 13.3 crores, the State has only two hospitals, which have burn units. Mahabodhi Burn Centre a unit of Victoria Hospital, and St John's Medical College and Hospital, are taking all the burden of burn cases over decades. Victoria Hospital and St John's College get at least 30 and three patients every day respectively.

A patient, Gyanappa, received 22 per cent burn and travelled from Koppal due to the lack of burn units in the district. "The family members have to sleep on the footpath as they have no money," said Gyanappa's attendant.

As per Mahabodhi Centre, 203 male patients, 96 female and 138 children were admitted to the hospital this year. Thirty-three children were admitted and four deaths were recorded in the last month.

Victoria Hospital, and St John's Medical College and Hospital in the City have been taking all the burden of burn cases over decades ***PHOTO: PTI***

"About 85 per cent of fire burn cases are preventable," said Dr Smitha Segu, Professor and Head of the plastic surgery unit. She said 50 per cent of patients have been admitted due to gas cylinder busts. Victoria Hospital is also looking for one more ICU unit, a source told Salar News.

Shortage of staffs

"Despite facilities such as expandable beds, the lack of enough nurses creates problems," said Dr Yogishwarappa CN, Prof and HOD, Bangalore Medical College. Out of 50 Group D members, 30 members were shifted to other hospitals. "Pregnant nurses who might have a risk of infection from the patients also work out of concern," a staff said. At St John's Hospital the bed strength is limited to six.

Call for Skin donations

During burn injuries, one way to promote healing is by covering the wound with donor skin. Dr Nagaraj BN, Skin Bank Coordinator said, "Due to lack of knowledge maximum four people donate their skin in a month." They have 4,000 sq centimetre of skin which is ready to be donated. *—Salar News*

Finances are a major issue

Dr Yogishwarappa told **Salar News**, "If we get funds we can introduce a robotic system that can be used for non-contact bathing." *—Salar News*

DEATHS

	JAN- JUNE 2023	JAN- JUNE 2024
Male	36	31
Female	29	28
Children	5	4

HOSPITALISED

	JAN- JUNE 2023	JAN- JUNE 2024
Male	204	203
Female	94	96
Children	139	138

Hemant Soren's govt wins trust votes

11 sworn in as ministers including ex-CM Champai Soren; Oppn walks out of the House

RANCHI, 8 JULY

Former Jharkhand chief minister Champai Soren and 10 other leaders of JMM-led coalition took oath as ministers in Hemant Soren government after it won a trust vote in the assembly amid a walkout by Opposition members on Monday.

A total of 45 MLAs, including nominated member Glen Joseph Galstaun, voted in favour of the confidence motion.

BJP and AJSU legislators walked out of the House as the headcount for voting started. BJP-led Opposition has 24 legislators of the saffron party and three of AJSU Party.

After winning the trust vote, Hemant Soren said, "Today, everyone again got to witness the unity and strength of the ruling alliance. I thank the Speaker, all alliance MLAs."

He said the JMM-led alliance has been performing strongly since coming to power in 2019 by following the constitutional procedures and it was again witnessed during the day.

75 MLAs were present in the assembly during the voting. Independent legislator Saryu Roy abstained from voting.

After the trust vote, Jharkhand Governor CP Radhakrishnan administered the oath of office and secrecy to the 11 leaders, including Champai Soren, at a function in the Raj Bhavan in the presence of Chief Minister Hemant Soren and other senior politicians of the JMM-led alliance and government officials.

Champai Soren had resigned from the post of CM on 3 July a day before JMM executive president Hemant Soren took oath as the 13th chief minister of Jharkhand on 4 July.

After taking oath as a minister, Champai Soren said, "Whatever I have done in a short span as CM is before everyone. Now let's see what responsibility is given to me."

The new faces in the 12-member cabinet, which includes the chief minister, are Congress's Jamtara MLA Irfan Ansari, Mahagama MLA Deepika Pandey Singh and JMM's Latehar MLA Baidynath Ram.

Ram's name had been excluded at the last moment from the list of ministers in the previous Champai Soren cabinet, which he had termed as an "insult". Assembly elections are due in Jharkhand later this year. *—PTI*

Jharkhand Governor CP Radhakrishnan with Chief Minister Hemant Soren and newly sworn ministers of the state Cabinet at Raj Bhavan, in Ranchi, on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

PHOTO: PTI

Delhi cops oppose Kejri's aide Kumar's plea in HC

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Delhi Police on Monday opposed in Delhi High Court a plea by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's aide Bibhav Kumar, challenging his arrest in connection with the alleged assault on AAP MP Swati Maliwal. The police submitted Kumar was not arrested "in haste" and that it had not faulted in any manner. Contending that his arrest was illegal, Kumar's counsel said there was a delay in lodging the FIR and he was arrested on 18 May, the day he gave an application to the police to voluntarily join the investigation. Justice Neena Bansal Krishna, after hearing the arguments of both sides, reserved the order. During the hearing, the counsel representing Kumar contended that he was picked up illegally from the residence of the chief minister without any prior notice. Kumar claimed he was arrested with an "oblique motive" while his anticipatory bail plea was pending in the trial court, in violation of his fundamental rights as well as the law. *—PTI*

ENPO halts 'public emergency' in 6 dists in Nagaland

KOHIMA, 8 JULY

Eastern Nagaland Peoples' Organisation (ENPO) has temporarily suspended its "public emergency" declared on 5 February in the six districts of Eastern Nagaland. The decision to this effect was taken during the ENPO's Central Executive Council (CEC) meeting held on 3 July in Tuensang as a "significant measure aimed at fostering mutual understanding and pursuing a peaceful resolution" regarding the creation of Frontier Nagaland Territory (FNT) by the Government of India. However, ENPO, an apex body of eight tribes of region – Chang, Khianiungan, Konyak, Phom, Sangtam, Tikhir, Yimkhiung and also Sumi, stated that the suspension is subject to review in the event of compelling circumstances. *—PTI*

BRS' Kavitha moves court for default bail

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

The Bharat Rashtra Samithi leader K Kavitha on Monday approached a Delhi Court seeking 'default' bail in the corruption case linked to the alleged excise scam. Special Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Judge Kaveri Baweja sought CBI's stand on the bail application which claimed that Kavitha should be granted 'default bail' as the investigating agency filed an "incomplete chargesheet" within the stipulated time of 60 days. The trial court also reserved order on the point of taking cognizance of the third chargesheet filed by CBI in the matter. While the bail application was listed for further consideration on 12 July, trial court said it will pronounce order on 15 July. *—PTI*

Delhi cops writes to 'X, seeks details on Mahua's remarks

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

A day after registering an FIR against TMC MP Mahua Moitra for her "derogatory" remark on NCW chief Rekha Sharma, the Delhi Police on Monday sought from social media company X details of the lawmaker's now-deleted comment. Moitra was booked under Section 79 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita that deals with a word, gesture or act intended to insult modesty of a woman. An official source said Delhi Police had written to X and added a response from the social media company was still awaited. Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader commented on a video posted on X that showed Sharma arriving at the site of a stampede in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras on 4 July. Moitra later deleted the post, which referred to a man holding an umbrella and walking behind the NCW chief. *—PTI*

PM Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladmir Putin are set to explore ways to further expand bilateral relations in diverse areas **PHOTO: PTI**

'Will PM ensure safety of Indians in Russia?'

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi headed to Russia on Monday, Congress asked whether he would take up the issue of Indian nationals fighting for the Russian Army in the war zone and ensure their safe return to India as soon as possible.

Congress general secretary, in-charge communications, Jairam Ramesh posed a series of questions for the prime minister in a post on X.

"India inherited a rich relationship with first the USSR and later Russia due to the astute diplomacy and strategic initiatives of various Congress governments through the decades. More recently, in his ten years as Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh met Vladmir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev (the two Presidents of Russia who served during his tenure) 16 times in India or Russia. By comparison, this is only Modi's 11th meeting with President Putin after 10 years in office," Ramesh said.

According to Indian Embassy in Moscow, at least 50 Indian nationals have joined the Russian Army, he added.

Accusing Modi government of practising "cronyism", Congress said companies must expand, but the government has a responsibility to ensure oligopolies or monopolies do not emerge and an undue advantage arising out of access to political power is not exercised. Ramesh alleged that market concentration continues to grow under Modi, and has reached a new high in key industries such as telecom, airlines, cement, steel, and tyres. *—PTI*

Jairam Ramesh **PHOTO: PTI**

India inherited a rich relationship with first the USSR and later Russia due to the astute diplomacy and strategic initiatives of various Congress governments through the decades. More recently, in his ten years as Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh met Vladmir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev (the two Presidents of Russia who served during his tenure) 16 times in India or Russia. By comparison, this is only Modi's 11th meeting with President Putin after 10 years in office

-Jairam Ramesh, Congress General Secy

MP Chief Minister Mohan Yadav greets Ramniwas Rawat after he took oath as a Cabinet minister at Raj Bhawan, on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

BJP's Rawat takes oath twice after 'misreading' words

BHOPAL, 8 JULY

BJP leader Ramniwas Rawat on Monday took oath as a cabinet minister in Madhya Pradesh, as Chief Minister Mohan Yadav expanded his ministry. However, Rawat had to be sworn in twice as he misread from his oath paper as "Rajya Mantri" (state minister) instead of "Rajya Ke Mantri", which means cabinet minister, an official said. When the authorities concerned came to know of the matter, it was decided that Rawat should take oath again. While the initial function was held at the Sandipani auditorium in the Raj Bhawan, the same programme was later held in the Darbar Hall of the Governor House.

Governor Mangubhai Patel again administered the oath of office and secrecy to Rawat in the Darbar Hall in the presence of CM Yadav and other dignitaries. Rawat then took oath as "Rajya Ke Mantri". Later, the chief minister told reporters outside Raj Bhawan, "Ramniwas Rawat took oath as cabinet minister." Rawat, the Congressman-turned-BJP politician, also clarified to mediapersons that he took oath as "cabinet minister". CM Yadav assumed office on December 13, 2023 following the state assembly elections. Although Rawat joined the BJP, he has not yet resigned from the state assembly as Congress MLA. Since joining the BJP at an election rally, Rawat had hesitated to confirm his switch over to the ruling side. *—PTI*

Armstrong's killing: TN top cop transferred

CHENNAI, 8 JULY

Tamil Nadu government on Monday transferred Sandeep Rai Rathore as Commissioner of Police, Greater Chennai and replaced him with senior IPS officer A Arun.

Arun is presently Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), Law and Order.

The reshuffle of senior IPS officials comes in the backdrop of the brutal killing of Tamil Nadu Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) leader K Armstrong by armed assailants last week.

Outlining his priorities, the city police chief, in an interaction with reporters here said that criminal elements would be 'taught' in a way they understand.

Asked if 'encounters' could be expected, he said there is no such thing as 'encounter,' and added that rowdy elements will be taught 'in the language they understand.' Regular and professional policing will bring down all crimes, he emphasised.

K Armstrong **PHOTO: PTI**

- The reshuffle of senior IPS officials comes in the backdrop of the brutal killing of Tamil Nadu Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) leader K Armstrong by armed assailants last week

Notably, he assured action against corrupt activities within the police department like 'Katta panchayats' (Kangaroo courts).

AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami said law and order could be handled well only by giving full freedom to the police department and slammed Chief Minister M K Stalin over the issue.

However, he is a 'puppet Chief Minister, an inept CM,' and there is no complete freedom for police officials and hence they could not properly maintain law and order, the former Chief Minister alleged.

Slain BSP Tamil Nadu president K Armstrong was laid to rest in neighbouring Tiruvallur district, hours after Madras High Court rejected the family's plea to bury the body at the party office here.

The burial was held at Pothur in Tiruvallur at the end of a nearly eight hour well-attended funeral procession from the city. *—PTI*

YS RAJASEKHARA WANTED RAHUL AS PM: REVANTH

HYDERABAD, 8 JULY

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Monday paid homage to former Chief Minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh YS Rajasekhara Reddy on his 75th birth anniversary and recalled that the departed leader wanted to see Rahul Gandhi as the Prime Minister of the country.

Let's take a pledge to make Rahul Gandhi PM, said Revanth Reddy.

Those who take a vow to make Rahul Gandhi as Prime Minister and work for it are the true successors of Rajasekhara Reddy. Those who work against this are against the late leader, he said.

He was speaking at an event held at Gandhi Bhavan here on the occasion of birth anniversary of Rajasekhara Reddy.

Rajasekhara Reddy, a Congress veteran, had served as Chief Minister of undivided Andhra between 2004 and 2009. He passed away in a chopper crash in 2009 while serving as the Chief Minister. *—PTI*

IS THERE NO END?

Agitators during a protest of the India Youth Front, an umbrella group representing INDIA bloc parties' youth wings, over the alleged irregularities in NEET 2024 results, at Jantar Mantar, in New Delhi, on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

In 3 months, 430 M'rashtra farmers die by suicide

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGARI, 8 JULY

A total of 430 farmers have committed suicide in Maharashtra's traditionally parched Marathwada region in the first six months of 2024, an official said on Monday. Incidentally, the highest number of deaths, at 101, has taken place in Beed district, which is the home turf of state agriculture minister and NCP leader Dhananjay Munde."In June alone there were 30 farmer suicides in Beed. Of the 101 who died in Beed, 46 cases qualified for ex-gratia of Rs 1 lakh, five cases were disqualified and 50 are under scrutiny," he said.Of the 430 cases, 256 qualified for ex-gratia, of which 169 were given aid, while 20 were rejected and 154 are under scrutiny, the official informed.As per data made available by the divisional commissioner's office, the number of farmer suicides was 101 in Beed, 64 in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, and 40 in Jalna. *—PTI*

'WHY PROTECT SOMEONE?'

SC rejects WB govt's plea against CBI probe in Sandeshkhali case

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Supreme Court said on Monday dismissed West Bengal government's plea challenging the high court's order, directing a CBI probe into the allegations of crimes against women and land grabbing in Sandeshkhali.

"It is all related to Sandeshkhali. You (state) didn't do anything for months," a bench of Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan told senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, who was appearing for West Bengal government.

Singhvi told the apex court that far-reaching directions issued by Calcutta High Court to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) at the most could be restricted to two FIRs related to an attack on the Enforcement Directorate officials in Sandeshkhali.

"Why should the state be interested in protecting someone?" it observed.

The bench dismissed the plea filed by the state government and clarified that any observations made in the high court's order shall not influence CBI in conducting the investigation.

CBI is already investigating the attack on ED officials in Sandeshkhali and has registered three FIRs related to the 5 January incident.

The High Court also directed the CBI to investigate allegations of crimes against women and land grabbing in Sandeshkhali and submit a comprehensive report to it on the next date of hearing.

Several complaints in the form of affidavits, including those of alleged sexual atrocities, land grabbing and other crimes such as assault and destruction of property, have been submitted by Priyanka Tibrewal. *—PTI*

CBI has registered 3 FIRs related to the incident already **PHOTO: PTI**

- The bench dismissed the plea filed t and clarified that any observations made in the order shall not influence CBI

Heavy rains lash Mumbai, flights hit

Roads were flooded as Mumbai receives more than 300 mm of rainfall in just six hours

PHOTO: PTI

Train in Mumbai reversed to rescue woman on track

MUMBAI, 8 JULY

A local train was reversed in Navi Mumbai to rescue a 50-year-old woman who fell on the track during peak hours on Monday, an official said. The incident occurred at Belapur station around 10 am, when a commuter fell while waiting for a Thane-bound train, the official said. "A Panvel-Thane train on platform number three of Belapur station was reversed to save the life of the woman commuter, and she was later rushed to nearby MGM hospital," said Swapnil Nila, chief public relations officer of the Central Railway. A video that surfaced on social media shows the train slowly reversing from a crowded platform with an injured woman lying on the track. The woman sustained severe injuries to her legs as the train passed over her, a railway official said. *—PTI*

4 killed as 2 groups open fire over water in Punjab

CHANDIGARH, 8 JULY

Four people were killed after two groups of villagers in Punjab's Gurdaspur district attacked and opened fire at each other apparently over an old rivalry, police said on Monday. The incident took place at Lighanwala Chowk in Sri Hargobindpur in Batala on Sunday night. There were 13 people in total in the two groups and all of them hail from village Vithwan here. Two people from each group died in the firing, said Batala Senior Superintendent of Police Ashwini Gotyal. The deceased are Balraj Singh, Shamsher Singh, Baljit Singh and Nirmal Singh. The police said eight people were injured in the incident and they have been admitted to a hospital in Amritsar. The injured are stated to be out of danger, said the police. *—PTI*

MP HC junks rape case citing 10-year relationship

JABALPUR, 8 JULY

Madhya Pradesh High Court has quashed a rape case registered against a man on a woman's complaint, observing the two were in a relationship for more than 10 years out of their "own free will". Justice Sanjay Dwivedi, in the order on 2 July, also observed the matter appears to be an abuse of the process of law. The man was booked for rape and other charges at the Mahila Thana police station in Katni district in November 2021. The woman and the man are well-educated and had physical relations out of their "own free will." They broke up after the man refused to marry her, it noted. However, it does not mean a rape case could be registered, the court said. *—PTI*

108 Kerala cops dismissed for criminal activities

T'PURAM, 8 JULY

The Kerala government has dismissed 108 police officers from service for their involvement in criminal activities since 2016, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said on Monday. Answering a question raised in the state Assembly on the action taken against the officers with criminal backgrounds, he said such officials are being closely monitored. "From 2016 to 31 May, 2024, 108 officials were dismissed for their involvement in criminal activities. The officials involved in corruption, anti-social activities, mafia relations are being closely monitored, and directions have been issued to take stern action," Vijayan said. On the rise in mafia violence, he said such gangs are constantly monitored by the intelligence wing, and a Special Action Group against Organised Crime has been formed. *—PTI*

Commuters wade through a waterlogged street following rains, in Mumbai, on Monday PHOTO: PTI

MUMBAI, 8 JULY

Heavy rains pounded Mumbai and adjoining areas, severely affecting the Central Railway's suburban services due to waterlogging on tracks and also hit the airport operations leading to 50 flight cancellations on Monday.

The rain mayhem led to inundation of many low-lying areas in the city, impacting vehicular movement, and people were seen wading through flooded streets.

The state government declared a holiday for all schools in Mumbai, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts.

Some areas in Mumbai received more than 300 mm of rainfall in just six hours ending at 7 am, causing inundation of roads and low-lying areas. Both houses of the Maharashtra legislature were adjourned as many members and officials could not reach the Vidhan Bhavan due to the downpour.

People make their way through a waterlogged street in Mumbai on Monday PHOTO: PTI

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde took stock of the heavy rain situation by chairing a meeting at the Mantralaya and visiting the control room of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). Train services on the fast line of the Central Railway's (CR) main corridor between Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) in south Mumbai and neighbouring Thane were suspended for a few hours due to waterlogging at various places and later resumed, as per officials.

54 people were rescued from flooded houses, bridge washed away in Thane.

At least 275 houses in different areas suffered damages and around 20 vehicles were swept away, the Thane district administration said in a release. Police and other district authorities have evacuated several tourists and trekkers stranded at the Raigad hill fort near Mumbai following heavy rains, officials said on Monday.

—PTI

3 killed as wall collapses in Goa rains

PANAJI, 8 JULY

Incessant rains lashed Goa for the third consecutive day on Monday, inundating several low-lying areas in the coastal state. Three people died in a wall collapse incident at Kundaim Industrial Estate amid heavy rainfall in North Goa on Sunday, police said. Labourers Dilip Yadav, 37, Mukesh Kumar Singh, 38 and Trinity Nayak, 47 died after a wall collapsed on them, an official said. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued an orange alert, forecasting moderate to heavy showers with strong surface winds, gusting to 40 to 50 km per hour, likely at many places in North and South Goa districts. *—PTI*

131 animals dead as floods devastate Kaziranga

GUWAHATI, 8 JULY

At least 131 wild animals have died so far in floods in the Kaziranga National Park while 96 others have been rescued, an official said on Monday.

The dead animals include six rhinos, 117 hog deer, including 98 by drowning, two by vehicle hits and 17 during treatment, two sambar, a rhesus macaque and an otter due to drowning in the park.

A total of 25 animals have died during treatment and these include 17 hog deer, one each of swamp deer, Rhesus Macaque and an otter pup.

The forest officials rescued 85 hog deer, two each of rhino, sambar and scops owl and one each of swamp deer, Indian hare, Rhesus Macaque, otter, elephant and a jungle cat. Currently, 25 animals are under medical care while 52 others have been released after treatment. The park is experiencing the worst-ever deluge in recent years with the previous large-scale devastation occurring in 2017 when over 350 wildlife died in the flood waters and in vehicle hits while migrating through animal corridors to the highlands. The NH-715 is a corridor for the animals to cross over to the hills of Karbi Anglong.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that the floods in the state have affected humans and animals alike and ''Team Assam is working round the clock to aid everyone''. *—PTI*

LANDSLIDES RAVAGE ARUNACHAL DISTS

ITANAGAR, 8 JULY

Surface communication to several districts in Arunachal Pradesh was disrupted by landslides triggered by rains, officials said on Monday.

Landslides buried a person in Shi-Yomi district on Friday, according to a report of the state disaster management department. So far four people have died in the state since April due to natural calamities.

The Tezu-Hayuliang road remains blocked at Mompani area in Lohit and Anjaw districts, while landslides blocked the Dari-Chambang and the Palin-Taraklengdi via Langdang village PMGSY road in Kra Daadi district, they said.

NH 513 also remained blocked at Geying in East Siang district, a report said.

Over 72,900 people and 257 villages have so far been affected by floods and landslides in Arunachal since April this year. *—PTI*

TERRORIST HIDEOUT BUSTED

Four terrorists, who were killed on Saturday in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam, had been staying in a hideout bunker inside an almirah in Chinnigam Frisal. In a video that surfaced online, security officials can be seen inspecting the hideout PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

50 injured as overloaded bus crashes in Haryana

CHANDIGARH, 8 JULY

An overloaded Haryana Roadways mini bus overturned near Pinjore on Monday, leaving 50 passengers injured, most of them school children, officials said.

The bus veered off the road near a turn when it was passing through a hilly patch near Pinjore in Panchkula district, a police official from Kalka said.

Panchkula Deputy Commissioner Yash Garg said that after the accident about 50 passengers, most of them children, were brought to hospitals in Panchkula and Pinjore.

"About 23-24 children who were brought are fine. They will be discharged soon. I think only five to seven or maybe even less will remain hospitalised which includes two children," the DC said and added that two-three children have suffered fractures.

However, an elderly woman suffered serious injury and had been referred to PGIMER at Chandigarh, he said.

Some accounts said the woman was on the road when the accident occurred.

Haryana Assembly Speaker Gian Chand Gupta, who is BJP MLA from Panchkula, told reporters at the Panchkula Civil Hospital, that the driver and conductor of the bus have been suspended.

"The bus was overloaded and we have been told that the vehicle's speed was slightly in excess. As it approached a turn, it overturned," Gupta said.

When asked if the mini bus was packed beyond capacity, Garg said preliminary reports suggest that the vehicle had a capacity of 40-50, but more people were travelling in it.

"Some children have said the speed of the bus was slightly in excess....A detailed probe is being conducted into the cause of the accident," he said. *—PTI*

The bus veered off the road near a turn when it was passing through a hilly patch near Pinjore in Panchkula district PHOTO: PTI

12 held in Bihar for impersonating CTET candidates

DARBHANGA, 8 JULY

Bihar Police arrested 12 people, including two women, for allegedly appearing in the Central Teacher Eligibility Test (CTET)-2024 and solving the exam on behalf of other candidates at various examination centres in Darbhanga district, police said. Darbhanga SSP Jagunath Reddy told reporters on Sunday, "Nine arrests were made from different centres under Laheriasarai police station's jurisdiction, while two were apprehended from a centre under Sadar police station, and one person was arrested from a centre under Bahadurpur police station."

The impersonation was detected through biometric fingerprint scans of candidates at the examination centres, police said. Police took action based on complaints filed by invigilators and administrators. Cases have been registered. Police are also gathering information about the genuine candidates. Police are also investigating whether the arrested are linked to any interstate cheating syndicate. CTET is conducted annually on a national level for candidates seeking teaching positions in the government sector. *—PTI*

MUMBAI BMW CRASH

'My wife would have been alive if car stopped'

MUMBAI, 8 JULY

Pradeep Nakhwa, the husband of Kaveri Nakhwa who was killed in BMW car hit-and-run incident in Mumbai, on Monday demanded stringent punishment for the driver, saying his wife could have been saved if he had stopped the car.

Talking to reporters, he recounted the events when the couple was returning from Crawford Market on Sunday morning after purchasing fish when their two-wheeler was struck from behind by a speeding car at around 5.30 am. Kaveri Nakhwa was riding pillion.

"We were riding at a speed of 30 to 35kph when a speeding car hit us from behind. Due to the impact, we landed on the bonnet of the car," recalled Pradeep Nakhwa, who sustained injuries. The driver pressed the brake, causing me to fall off, but my wife was trapped under the front wheel," he recounted.

PHOTO: PTI

Mumbai police have formed six teams to nab the 24-year-old son of a ruling Shiv Sena leader after a BMW car the youth was driving crashed into a scooter, killing a woman and injuring her husband, an official said.

A Look Out Circular (LOC) has also been put out against Mihir Shah, son of Rajesh Shah, a Shiv Sena leader from neighbouring Palghar district, the official said on Monday.

A Mumbai court on Monday remanded Rajesh Shah in 14-day judicial custody. He was later granted bail. His driver, also an accused in the case, was sent to police custody till Tuesday. *—PTI*

Pune cop killed as car hits his bike; accused arrested

PUNE, 8 JULY

A 24-year-old man was arrested on Monday after a car allegedly driven by him rammed into a motorbike of two policemen on patrolling duty, leaving one of them dead and another injured, in Pune city, officials said.

The accident occurred late Sunday night near Harris Bridge in Khadki area, they said. Khadki police station's beat marshalls Sanjog Shinde and Samadhan Koli were on patrolling duty near the Harris Bridge when a speeding car hit their vehicle from behind, a senior official said.

"Both of them fell and the car driver fled from the spot in his vehicle. Koli lost his life in the accident while the other policeman was injured and is receiving treatment in a private hospital. We have deployed teams to nab the car driver," he said. Another police officer said the car was driven by Siddharth Kengar, a service centre employee, and the vehicle belonged to his friend. The spot of the accident is not covered by CCTV cameras. Kengar was arrested from his residence after some crime branch personnel spotted a damaged car speeding towards Pimple Nilakh area in Pune city and gave it a chase. *—PTI*

STRONG VERDICTS

Cops can't peep into life of accused: SC

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

The Supreme Court on Monday said there cannot be a bail condition which allows the police to peep into the private life of an accused in a criminal case.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan set aside a bail condition imposed by the Delhi High Court requiring a Nigerian national to share the Google Maps pin in his mobile device with the investigating officer in a drugs case.

The court pronounced the verdict on a plea of Frank Vitus, a Nigerian national challenging the bail condition in a drugs case.

On 29 April, the top court had reserved its verdict said it would examine whether one of the conditions imposed by the Delhi High Court asking an accused to "drop a Google pin" from his mobile phone to enable investigators to track his movement while on bail violated the fundamental right to privacy.

On 8 February, this year, the Delhi High Court granted bail to one Raman Bhuraria. He was arrested in connection with a money laundering probe arising from an alleged Rs 3,269 crore financial irregularity case against Shakti Bhog Foods Ltd.

The High Court had imposed several bail conditions and one of them read that "The applicant shall drop a Google pin location from his mobile phone to the IO concerned which shall be kept operational throughout his bail." *—PTI*

The court pronounced the verdict on a plea of Frank Vitus, a Nigerian national challenging the bail condition in a drugs case PHOTO: PTI

SC lays down rules on portrayal of specially-abled in visual media, films

The Supreme Court had laid down guidelines against "disparaging" portrayal of people with special abilities in visual media and films on Monday, saying that such terms such as "cripple" and "spastic" have acquired "devalued meanings" in societal perceptions. The verdict came on a plea filed by one Nipun Malhotra, who submitted that the Hindi film 'Aankh Micholi' contained deprecatory references to specially abled people. *—PTI*

Nithari killings: SC to hear pleas

The Supreme Court agreed on Monday to hear pleas filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation challenging the Allahabad High Court's verdict acquitting Surendra Koli in 2006 Nithari serial killings. A bench of Justices sought a response from Koli on pleas by CBI. *—PTI*

Scribe murder: SC ask convict's reply

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to examine the pleas filed by Delhi Police challenging the High Court's order granting bail to 4 convicts, sentenced to life imprisonment in the murder case of TV journalist Soumya Vishwanathan. *—PTI*

MANIPUR CRIES

Around two thousand women held a torch rally at Kakching Keithel calling for the return of peace in Manipur. The women urged Indians to pay attention to the crisis in the state and help restore law. They raised many slogans including "Bring peace in Manipur", "Territorial integrity of Manipur cannot be compromised" and "Long live Manipur". Manipur descended into chaos and violence in May last year over a High Court order directing the state to include Meiteis in the STs list. At least 200 people have been killed since ethnic violence first broke out on 3 May last year when a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised to protest against Meitei's demand for ST status

PHOTO: PTI

Fetching water is holding back Indian women

Fetching drinking water is a gruelling daily routine for millions of women in India.

Even without enduring the scorching summer months or the freezing winters, they walk for miles every day, balancing plastic or earthen pots on their heads and carrying buckets in their hands to manage the household water stock.

"It's a daily struggle. I get so tired that I collapse when I'm done," says Sunita Bhurbade from Tringalwadi, a tribal village 180km from Mumbai.

Bhurbade spends four-to-five hours every day travelling back and forth from her nearest reliable water source - a dry lake - to fill her pots. The water is dirty and she has to dig holes on the side for the water to filter through naturally and seep in.

"For four-to-five months every year, women have no option but to fetch water from long distances because nearby wells and water sources dry up," she says. Ironically, her village receives one of the heaviest rainfalls in the region.

Because of this daily grind, she constantly complains of back and neck pain, fatigue and weakness.

The daily rigour also bars her and other women from her village from pursing a paid job.

"No-one will hire me even as a farm labourer because they won't allow me to show up at work in the afternoon," she says.

"If I go after water, I have to sacrifice my livelihood. If I try to earn a wage, my family stays thirsty."

According to a 2023 report by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Unicef, 1.8 billion people worldwide collect drinking water from supplies located off premises, and in seven out of 10 households, women and girls are primarily responsible for water collection.

This is particularly true in India where, experts say, the need to secure drinking water is holding women back and hindering economic growth.

Women spend up to five hours a day collecting drinking water for their family ***PHOTO: PTI***

"First, women can't take up paid work because they have to do all the household chores and secondly, even if they wish to find some work after doing their daily chores, there are not enough paid jobs for women in rural India," says Prof Ashwini Deshpande, who heads the economics department in Delhi's Ashoka University.

The value of women's unpaid labour in Indian economy is huge. India's largest commercial bank State Bank of India (SBI)'s Ecowrap report indicates that the total contribution of unpaid women's work to the economy is around Rs 22.7 billion, almost 7.5per cent of India's total GDP.

The NGO International Development Organisation estimates that Indian women spend 150 million work days every year fetching water.

Experts say that if women can spend this time in paid activities, they can be financially independent and it can also boost the economy.

The Indian government says it is constantly working to improve water infrastructure countrywide. By January 2024, it said it had provided piped water to almost 74per cent of rural households.

For those who had to earlier fetch water from outside but are now getting piped water in their homes, the experience has been life-changing.

"I open the tap, water comes rushing… it's like a dream. I had been fetching water since I was five," says Mangal Khadke, who's married and in her 30s and lives about 30km from Bhurbade.

But there are still millions who lack access to tap water.

Around 700km away from Tringalwadi, in the Aaki village of central India's Amaravati district, village head Indrayani Javarkar spends most of her day finding and collecting water.

"It's so dry here in the summer that every day I wake up with one thought in my mind: where can I find water today?" she says.

Indrayani has two jobs: first, find and collect water for her family, and second, to organise water tankers for her village.

"Both the tasks are getting harder every day," she says.

Bhurbade says getting tap water for her is still a distant dream.

"[Women] start when they are children themselves. Someone hands them a small bucket and says, fetch what you can carry. And then, it's a lifetime's obligation - until she dies, she is fetching water," she says.

Bhurbade doesn't remember a single year where she didn't have to walk miles with a pot on her head.

We asked what she would do if she didn't have to fetch water and had spare time.

She thinks hard and says she likes to sing. But her songs are also about water.

"Radu nako bala mi panyala jate," she sings for us.

It means: "Don't cry my child, I am going to fetch water." *—BBC News*

LETTERS

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SALAR

6 most urgent issues that UK's new govt must fix

Keir Starmer's Labour party has won the UK general election in a landslide. Its huge majority should, in theory, give Starmer the clout to see through most of his political agenda. But in reality, the victory celebrations might prove short-lived, given the size of the challenges in front of him.

When Tony Blair came to power in 1997, he inherited a strong economy and a tide of booming national optimism. Starmer, by contrast, inherits an economy in the doldrums and a mandate seemingly more motivated by a desire to remove the Conservatives than by enthusiasm for Labour's manifesto.

The new Cabinet will be faced with an array of problems demanding immediate attention. What one senior Labour official has reportedly dubbed Sue Grey's "shit list" spans multiple government departments, from education to justice to infrastructure. Looking at these problems in turn, we might ask: is the party over before it's even begun?

The new Cabinet led by Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer will face an array of problems ***PHOTO: PTI***

1. Thames Water

The UK's largest water company is in a deep financial hole, with more than £18 billion of debt, evaporating investment, and a long-running standoff between shareholders and the industry regulator, Ofwat, over the paying of dividends. This, combined with the considerable investment required to overhaul Thames Water's creaking infrastructure, has put the company on the brink of collapse.

Ofwat is expected to publish its plan for the water industry on July 15, less than two weeks into the new government's first term. The regulator is expected to rule out allowing Thames Water to raise bills as it had planned to. If so, or if Ofwat insists that infrastructure pledges be met, then Starmer might well have to consider an expensive nationalisation of this water company.

2. Overcrowding in prisons

According to the Prison Governors' Association (PGA), prisons in England and Wales are 99per cent full. With knock-on effects for the court system's ability to hear cases and pass sentencing, the PGA warns that "the entire criminal justice system stands on the precipice of failure".

Labour has promised to reform the planning system so prisons are designated as sites of national importance, meaning it can build more of them. However, it will still take years to yield the 20,000 extra jail places Labour has pledged. And even if this does happen, there is no clear consensus that simply increasing capacity will solve all the problems, without similarly resourcing the rehabilitative arm of the Prison Service.

The obvious solution to creating more capacity in the short term is early releases. This can include prisoners nearing the end of their sentences and those who are deemed of low risk to the public. Currently, judges are also being asked to consider their sentencing options.

3. Public sector pay negotiations

Given Labour's historical links with the major public sector trade unions, including Unite and Unison, public sector workers may be hoping that the new government will counter 14 years of pay stagnation under the Conservatives.

However, early on in the election cycle, it became clear that some unions were not happy with Labour's manifesto. Unite refused to endorse it and the new chancellor, Rachel Reeves, has made no effort to suggest money will flow more freely while she heads up the Treasury.

With inflationary pressures easing and interest rates predicted to fall by late summer, some will argue that the case for pay rises is dissipating. Yet for others, lack of action on pay will be an admission that Britain's standard of living has slipped permanently.

4. Universities going under

The financial crisis in England's universities has long been brewing. Many are faced with a precipitous collapse in overseas student numbers and an accompanying loss of income – a problem compounded by their overall operating loss when providing for home students.

Home tuition fees have barely risen since the £9,000 fee was introduced in 2012 – while in real terms they have dropped by a third. The £9,250 universities now receive for each home student compares badly with the actual cost for teaching a student, which is calculated at £12,000.

Many universities are wrestling with high interest rates and a slowdown in the property market, making loans taken out on capital investments increasingly difficult to pay. Some politicians have called for domestic tuition fees to be raised. However, as Nick Clegg and the Lib Dems can attest, tuition fees are one of the "third rails" of British politics – touch it and you die.

Starmer is left with only two realistic options: get rid of the limits on international student numbers, or significantly revisit the way universities are funded – but again, this would require throwing money at the problem. As with other aspects of its manifesto, Labour has been vague on its proposals for higher education, perhaps in an attempt to leave all options on the table.

5. NHS funding shortfall

The health service currently has a budget shortfall of £12 billion. This reflects multiple challenges – from treatments getting more expensive and crumbling infrastructure to ballooning waiting times and disputes over pay.

Although Labour has seemingly recognised that funding is important, its manifesto refused to put a number on how much it would commit. Instead, the pledges were accompanied by promises of modernisation and reform to improve the service. The Institute for Fiscal Studies estimates Labour's pledges to be worth £1.8 billion – way short of the required amount.

The state of the NHS is a constant litmus test for any government, so addressing this will always be a top priority.

However, with meagre public finances, it might be easier said than done.

—The Conversation

Democrats weigh risks and rewards of losing Joe Biden

President Joe Biden sought to revive his beleaguered re-election effort on Sunday, as members of his party debated the future of his candidacy.

The President's halting debate performance last week raised serious questions about his physical and mental capacity to run. A prime time interview with ABC on Friday fuelled further speculation about his campaign's future.

Amid the uncertainty, Biden appeared at two campaign events in Pennsylvania, a key swing state, on Sunday.

But those efforts have not stopped the president's fellow Democrats from weighing the risks and rewards of keeping Biden, 81, at the top of the ticket. On Sunday afternoon, House minority leader Hakeem Jeffries convened a meeting with ranking Democratic lawmakers that reportedly included discussion of Biden's candidacy.

Four of those on the call said they thought Biden should drop out, according to CBS, the BBC's US news partner. Sources said at least three others expressed concern about his chances in November.

A number of top Democratic figures also voiced their stances in televised interviews over the weekend, aiming to address the question: is it riskier to stick with Biden or to leave him behind?

Some say the party could be headed to defeat against Donald Trump in November if Biden stays on, but others say replacing him comes with many unknowns.

Some see potential in a fresh start

Amid the fallout of Biden's disastrous debate performance, asking the president to step aside could bring some immediate relief.

Some Democrats, including avowed supporters of the president, have said as much, suggesting that concerns about his age and mental acuity had grown difficult to overcome.

The debate "rightfully raised questions among the American people about whether the president has the vigour to defeat Donald Trump", said California Representative Adam Schiff on Sunday.

Schiff stopped short of saying Biden should drop out in his interview with NBC News - a position taken publicly by five House Democrats so far.

Instead, Schiff urged him to seek advice from people with "distance and objectivity" and make a decision about whether he believes he is the best candidate to run.

"Given Joe Biden's incredible record, given Donald Trump's terrible record, he [Biden] should be mopping the floor with Donald Trump," Schiff said. "It should not be even close and there's only one reason it is close, and that's the president's age."

Amid the uncertainty over the poll race, President Joe Biden appeared at two campaign events in Pennsylvania, a key swing state, on Sunday ***PHOTO: PTI***

Biden is 81, while Trump has just turned 78. The ages of both candidates have become an increasingly contentious point among voters.

On the left, polls suggest some voters are losing faith in Mr Biden. In a Wall Street Journal poll released on Friday, 86per cent of Democrats said they would support Mr Biden, down from 93per cent in February.

A different candidate may also offer a clean slate in other areas, too.

Before this wave of Democratic panic, Biden drew criticism from voters on several policy fronts, including his handling of the US economy and the migrant crisis at the country's southern border.

The president faced a threat of defection from progressive voters who oppose his response to Israel's war in Gaza.

Their resistance cost him more than 100,000 votes in Michigan - a crucial swing state - during its primary in February.

A Biden ticket "is going to drag everybody else down", said former Ohio Representative Tim Ryan on Sunday in an interview with Fox News. "I think you're going to see a significant amount of pressure whether it's today or tomorrow, sometime this week, as members come back that this may be untenable for them."

Others say the unknown is too big a risk

Any benefit to losing Biden may be muted by the looming risks, according to some Democratic leaders.

If the president stood aside, most of what comes after remains unclear: who would replace Biden, and how? And how would that candidate fare against Trump?

And in recent days, several Biden allies have stressed the pitfalls of charting a new course, arguing that Biden has been a proven success.

"Biden is old," said Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, 82, on CBS News on Sunday. "He is not as articulate as he once was. I wish he could jump up the steps on Air Force One. He can't. What we have got to focus on is policy - whose policies have and will benefit the vast majority of the people in this country."

California Governor Gavin Newsom, who spent the weekend stumping for the president, said the same at a rally in Doylestown, Pennsylvania on Saturday.

"It's the hypothetical that gets in the way of progress in terms of promoting this candidacy," Newsom said. "It's exactly where the other party wants us to be, is having this internal fight, and I think it's extraordinarily unhelpful."

Biden's public supporters say replacing him may become a direct benefit to Trump's Republicans, who can argue their opponents are engulfed in party chaos.

"We've got to stop talking about this," Representative Debbie Dingell of Michigan said on CNN on Sunday. "We've spent a whole week. Republicans are having a great time. I mean, we need to get back to talking about Donald Trump and his performance."

A middle path in keeping Harris?

Earlier this week, former Ohio Representative Tim Ryan put forward a potential replacement: Mr Biden's Vice-president Kamala Harris.

"I strongly believe that our best path forward is Kamala Harris," he wrote in a op-ed for Newsweek. "Those who say that a Harris candidacy is a greater risk than the Joe Biden we saw the other night and will continue to see are not living in reality." *—BBC News*

PHOTO: PTI

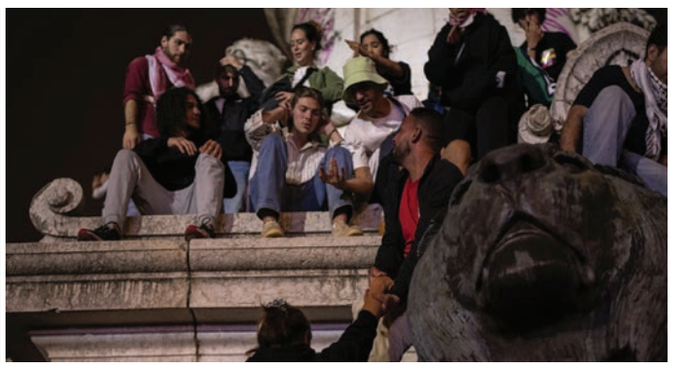
Iran's naval destroyer has sunk: State media

TEHRAN, 8 JULY

Iranian naval destroyer has sunk while it was being repaired in a port near the Strait of Hormuz, state media reported Sunday. State-run IRNA news agency reported that the Sahand destroyer, being repaired at a wharf lost its balance due to water infiltration into the tanks. The agency added that due to the low depth in the waters, it is possible to bring back the destroyer to balance. It also reported that injured people were transferred to hospital. It did not elaborate. Sahand, named after a mountain in northern Iran, took six years to build and launched into the Persian Gulf in December 2018. The 1,300-ton vessel was equipped with surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles, anti-aircraft batteries and sophisticated radar radar Vevading capabilities. —*AP*

Clashes break out in France after exit poll

At least 50 politicians, campaigners assaulted; 30,000 officers mobilised to control the mob



Bicycles burn during tensions near Republique plaza following the second round of the legislative elections; People gather at the Republique plaza after the second round of the legislative election on Monday PHOTO: PTI

PARIS, 8 JULY

Serious riots and clashes broke out at rallies in Paris and other cities on Sunday following the second round of the French parliamentary elections which saw the left-wing New Popular Front pull of a surprise win, according to initial projections.

In Paris, thousands of people gathered on the Place de la République in the centre of the capital to celebrate the victory of the left-wing alliance in the snap election. According to media reports, some of the demonstrators clashed with police, who used tear gas. Wooden barricades were set on fire.

Numerous shops and banks in central Paris had secured their windows with wooden panels on election day in anticipation of possible riots.

Videos posted on social media showed police wearing riot gear confronting the demonstrators as teargas were released, and several protesters were arrested. The demonstrators threw Molotov cocktails on the roads, setting off smoke bombs, prompting clashes between them and the riot police.

Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin had mobilised 30,000 officers for Sunday to prevent clashes, with 5,000 deployed in Paris and the capital's suburbs alone.

Clashes were also reported in the northern city of Lille between far-left activists and police. Officers used tear gas. According to media reports, 25 people were arrested in Rennes, western France, after riot police deployed tear gas against a group of left-wing demonstrators chanting "Everyone hates the police".

In Nantes, a police officer was injured by a Molotov cocktail thrown at him, according to local media. Demonstrators threw fireworks at the security forces, who responded by deploying tear gas. More than 50 politicians and campaigners have been assaulted during the French election, the interior minister said.

—*DPA with agencies*

THE FRENCH ELECTION

Total seats 577 | Majority mark 289

NUMBER OF SEATS WON BY PARTIES

New Popular Front (NPF)	178
Macron+ Allies (Ens)	150
National Rally+ Allies (RN)	142
Republicans (LR)	39
Other	68

THE CONTENDERS FOR THE ELECTION

1ST PLACE
NPF (FAR LEFT ALLIANCE OF JEAN LUC MELENCHON)

2ND PLACE
CENTRIST COALITION (OF PRESIDENT EMMANUEL MACRON)

3RD PLACE
NATIONAL RALLY PARTY (FAR RIGHT OF MARINE LA PEN)

WHO ARE THE MEMBERS OF NPF?

NPF was formed as an 11th hour coalition after Macron called for a surprise Parliamentary polls

SOCIALIST PARTY
OLIVIER FAURE

GREEN PARTY
MARINE TONDELIER

HARD LEFT FRANCE UNBOWED-
JEAN LUC MELENCHON

COMMUNIST PARTY
FABIEN ROUSSEL

Boat carrying 283 migrants to Europe reaches Greece

ATHENS, 8 JULY

A fishing boat carrying nearly 300 migrants to Europe has safely reached a southern Greek island after a large rescue operation in the Mediterranean Sea, Greek authorities said Monday. There were no immediate reports of injury or ill health among the 283 migrants, the coast guard said. A coast guard statement said a search was launched before dawn Monday after authorities were notified that a vessel carrying migrants was hit by high winds south of Crete. Two coast guard vessels, four merchant ships and two smaller private boats took part in the operation, and the migrant vessel was located 18 nautical miles (20 miles) south of Gavdos, a small island off southern Crete. —*AP*

Unable to pay for treatment, Pak man buries child alive

NAUSHAHRO FEROZE, 8 JULY

In a tragic and appalling incident, a father has been arrested for the heinous act of burying his 15-day-old daughter alive in Tharushah, as reported by ARY News. Police officials disclosed that the father, identified as Tayyab, confessed to this grievous deed, citing financial constraints that prevented him from affording medical treatment for his infant daughter. Tayyab admitted to placing the newborn in a sack before burying her. A case has been formally lodged against Tayyab, who has admitted guilt in the matter. Authorities have indicated that pursuant to a court directive, the child's grave will be opened for forensic examination through postmortem procedures, according to ARY News. —*ANI*

16 more insects added in Singapore's menu

SINGAPORE, 8 JULY

TheSingapore's food watchdog on Monday said it has approved some 16 species of insects like crickets, grasshoppers, locusts, mealworms and silkwormsfor human consumption, adding to the internationally-renowned menu of global foods including Chinese and Indian dishes in the multi-ethnic city-state. The much-awaited announcement comes to the delight of industry players who have been gearing supply and catering in Singapore to insects grown in China, Thailand and Vietnam, The Straits Times newspaper reported. The Singapore Food Agency (SFA) said that those intending to import or farm insects for human consumption or livestock feed must meet SFA's guidelines, including providing documentary proof that the imported insects are farmed in regulated establishments with food safety controls and are not harvested from the wild.—*PTI*

22 KILLED

Russian attack hits children's hospital

KYIV, 8 JULY

Russian missiles struck a children's hospital in Kyiv and killed at least three people elsewhere in the Ukrainian capital Monday, authorities said, while another attack in the central Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih killed at least 22 people.

It was the biggest bombardment of Kyiv in several months. The daylight attacks included Kinzhal hypersonic missiles, one of the most advanced Russian weapons, the Ukrainian air force said. The Kinzhal flies at 10 times the speed of sound, making it hard to intercept. City buildings shook from the blasts.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Russia targeted five cities with more than 40 missiles of different types. The attack struck Okhmatdyt children's hospital in Kyiv, Ukraine's biggest children's medical facility. There was no immediate word on casualties there.

—*AP*

Emergency services work at the site of Okhmatdyt children hospital hit by Russian missiles, in Kyiv, Ukraine on Monday PHOTO: PTI

BIDEN LAUDS UKRAINE AT NATO SUMMIT

WASHINGTON, 8 JULY

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) summit, being hosted by US President Joe Biden here this week, is likely to show a strong demonstration of America and its allies' support for Ukraine and make significant new announcements to increase military, political and financial support for the war-torn European country, according to administration officials. —*PTI*

China's Xi calls on world powers to help Russia

BEIJING, 8 JULY

Chinese President Xi Jinping called on world powers to help Russia and Ukraine resume direct dialogue and negotiations during a meeting Monday with Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, according to state broadcaster CCTV.

Orbán made a surprise visit to China after similar trips last week to Russia and Ukraine to discuss prospects for a peaceful settlement in Ukraine.

Orbán praised China's "constructive and important initiatives" for achieving peace and described Beijing as a stabilizing force amid global turbulence, according to CCTV.

Besides Russia and Ukraine, the end of the war "depends on the decision of three world powers, the United States, the European Union and China," Orbán said.

—*PTI*

Hungary's Orban visits China

BEIJING, 8 JULY

Hungary's Premier Viktor Orbán is making a surprise visit to China on Monday after similar trips to Russia and Ukraine to discuss prospects for a peaceful settlement in Ukraine. Orbán met with Chinese President Xi Jinping, according to state broadcaster CCTV. His previously unannounced visit comes on the heels of similar trips last week to Moscow and Kyiv, where he proposed that Ukraine consider agreeing to an immediate ceasefire with Russia. His visit to Moscow drew condemnation from Kyiv, European leaders. —*AP*

SA: Nearly 1,000 homes destroyed by storms

CAPE TOWN, 8 JULY

Nearly 1,000 homes in informal settlements in Cape Town, South Africa, have been destroyed by gale-force winds, displacing around 4,000 people, authorities and an aid organization said as the city braces for a week of damaging storms.

South African weather authorities said Monday that Cape Town and surrounding areas are expected to be hit by multiple cold fronts until at least Friday, bringing torrential rain, strong winds and flooding.

Cape Town's disaster coordination team has been on alert since last Thursday, when the first front arrived.

The worst-hit areas are expected to be the poor, informal settlements on the edge of South Africa's second biggest city. Thousands have been displaced in the township of Khayelitsha on the outskirts of Cape Town after strong winds destroyed homes and other structures. The Gift of the Givers local aid organization said it provided 10,000 meals and 3,000 blankets to displaced people in Khayelitsha over the weekend.

Similarly, massive floods have swept through swathes of Nepal and Bangladesh in recent days, killing scores of people and affecting millions of others. Large-scale rescue operations are under way, with authorities directing thousands to shelters while sending food and supplies to those who are stranded.

—*PTI/BBC News*

Landslide kills 11 people at illegal mine

JAKARTA, 8 JULY

A landslide triggered by torrential rains crashed onto an unauthorised gold mining operation on Indonesia's Sulawesi island, killing at least 11 people, officials said Monday. Nineteen others were reported missing. About 35 villagers were digging for grains of gold in a pit at the small traditional gold mine in Bone Bolango when tons of mud plunged down the surrounding hills and buried them. —*AP*

Japan, Philippines sign defence pact to face China

MANILA, 8 JULY

Japan and the Philippines signed a key defence pact on Monday allowing the deployment of Japanese forces for joint military exercises, including live-fire drills, to the Southeast Asian nation that came under brutal Japanese occupation in World War II but is now building an alliance with Tokyo as they face an increasingly assertive China.

The Reciprocal Access Agreement, which similarly allows Filipino forces to enter Japan for joint combat training, was signed by Philippine Defence Secretary Gilberto Teodoro and Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa in a Manila ceremony witnessed by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. It would take effect after ratification by the countries' legislatures, Philippine and Japanese officials said.

Kamikawa and Japanese Defence Minister Minoru Kihara later held talks with their Philippine counterparts on ways to further deepen relations.

Under Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, the Japanese government has taken steps to boost its security and defensive firepower, including a counter-strike capability that breaks from Japan's postwar principle of focusing only on self-defence, amid threats from North Korea and China's growing assertiveness. —*PTI*

UK PM to improve on trade deal with EU

LONDON, 7 JULY

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer is seeking to reset relations at home and abroad.

During a visit Sunday to Edinburgh, that he billed as an "immediate reset" with the regional governments of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, Starmer said he would also seek to improve the UK's "botched" trade deal with the European Union.

"I do think that we can get a much better deal than the botched deal that (former Prime Minister) Boris Johnson saddled the UK with," he said in reference to the pact negotiated after Brexit. Starmer said there were many discussions ahead to strengthen trading, research and defense ties with the EU. But he said those talks had begun as his top diplomat made his first visit abroad to Germany, Poland and Sweden.

With two of Starmer's ministers in Europe ahead of a NATO meeting next week, the premier made a point of visiting the leaders of the regional governments in the UK following his party's landslide victory last week. Starmer, who said he has a "mandate to do politics differently," met with Scottish First Minister John Swinney in an effort to "turn disagreement into cooperation."

While each of the devolved nations in the UK elects members to the House of Commons in London, they also have their own regional parliaments. Starmer's Labour Party trounced Swinney's Scottish National Party for seats in Parliament. But the SNP, which has pushed for Scottish independence, still holds a majority at Holyrood, the Scottish parliament. —*AP*

Keir Starmer PHOTO: PTI

- Keir billed as an "immediate reset" with the regional governments of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, Starmer said he would also seek to improve the UK's "botched" trade deal with the EU

'Gaza war helped Hamas soften ceasefire demands'

DUBAI, 8 JULY

Several officials in the Middle East and the US believe the level of devastation in the Gaza Strip caused by a nine-month Israeli offensive likely has helped push Hamas to soften its demands for a cease-fire agreement.

Hamas over the weekend appeared to drop its longstanding demand that Israel promise to end the war as part of any cease-fire deal. The sudden shift has raised new hopes for progress in internationally brokered negotiations.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday boasted that military pressure — including Israel's ongoing two-month offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah — "is what has led Hamas to enter negotiations."

But in recent internal communications seen by The Associated Press, messages signed by several senior Hamas figures in Gaza urged the group's exiled political leadership to accept the cease-fire proposal pitched by US President Joe Biden.

The messages, shared by a Middle East official familiar with the ongoing negotiations, described the heavy losses Hamas has suffered on the battlefield and the dire conditions in the war-ravaged territory. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to share the contents of internal Hamas communications.

—*AP*

737 MAX CRASHES

Boeing to plead guilty to fraud charge

WASHINGTON, 8 JULY

Boeing has agreed to plead guilty to a criminal fraud conspiracy charge after the US found the company violated a deal meant to reform it after two fatal crashes by its 737 Max planes that killed 346 passengers and crew.

The Department of Justice (DoJ) said the plane-maker had also agreed to pay a criminal fine of $243.6m. However, the families of the people who died on the flights five years ago have criticised it as a "sweetheart deal" that would allow Boeing to avoid full responsibility for the deaths.

The settlement must now be approved by a US judge. By pleading guilty, Boeing will avoid the spectacle of a criminal trial - something that victims' families have been pressing for. The company has been in crisis over its safety record since two near-identical crashes involving 737 Max aircraft in 2018 and 2019. It led to the global grounding of the plane for more than a year. But in January, shortly before that period was due to end, a door panel in a Boeing plane operated by Alaska Airlines blew out soon after take-off and forced the jet to land.

No-one was injured during the incident but it intensified scrutiny over how much progress Boeing had made on improving its safety and quality record. In May, DoJ said it had found Boeing had violated the terms of the agreement.

Boeing's decision to plead guilty is still a significant black mark for the firm because it means that the company - which is a prominent military contractor for the US government - now has a criminal record. It is also one of the world's two biggest manufacturers of commercial jets.

—*BBC News*

The Department of Justice (DoJ) said the plane-maker had also agreed to pay a criminal fine of $243.6 million PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

PHOTO: PTI

Indian bizman Ram Buxani dies at 83 in UAE

DUBAI, 8 JULY

Prominent Indian businessman Ram Buxani, who had been living in the United Arab Emirates since he came here as an 18-year-old, died at 83 on Sunday. India's Ambassador to the UAE Sanjay Sudhir took the lead in mourning the death of the chairman of the ITL Cosmos group, who was also a prominent philanthropist. "In his passing, the community has lost a guide, a role model and a mentor. Buxani has done the Indian community in the UAE proud. He will remain an inspiration for generations of Indians who call the UAE home," Ambassador Sudhir said. As soon as the news of Buxani's death was announced, members of the Indian community started sharing memories of the departed soul. The cause of his death has not been announced. *—PTI*

Gold rises ₹100; silver rallies ₹870 amid global cues

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Gold prices rose Rs 100 to Rs 73,410 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday in line with strong global trend, according to HDFC Securities. The precious metal closed at Rs 73,310 per 10 grams in the previous session. Silver prices also rallied Rs 870 to Rs 94,270 per kg. It had settled at Rs 93,400 per kg in the previous session. "In Delhi markets, spot gold prices (24 carats) are quoted at Rs 73,410 per 10 grams, up by Rs 100 from the Friday's afternoon price. In the international markets, spot gold at Comex was USD 2,373 per ounce, up USD 10 per ounce from the previous close. Additionally, silver is also quoted higher at USD 30.93 per ounce. It had finished at USD 30.55 per ounce in the previous session. *—PTI*

Rupee falls 1 paisa to settle at 83.50 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 8 JULY

The rupee pared initial gains to settle 1 paisa lower at 83.50 against the US dollar on Monday, as muted domestic equities weighed on investor sentiments. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.45 and hit the intraday high of 83.44 and a low of 83.50 against the American currency during the session. It finally settled at 83.50 against the dollar, registering a loss of one paisa over the previous close. Forex traders said the rupee gained on a weak dollar and decline in crude oil prices. However, weak domestic markets put pressure on the domestic unit. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength was trading at 104.90, higher. *—PTI*

Maruti Suzuki plans to dispatch 35% of its vehicle via rlys

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Maruti Suzuki India plans to utilise Indian Railways to transport 35 per cent of the vehicles produced across its factories over the next 7-8 years, according to MD and CEO Hisashi Takeuchi. The share of vehicle dispatches through railways scaled to 21.5 per cent in the 2023-24 fiscal from 5 per cent in 2014-15. The country's largest carmaker's vehicle dispatches through railways increased from 65,700 units in 2014-15 to 4,47,750 units in 2023-24. Maruti Suzuki has so far dispatched over 20 lakh units through Indian Railways. The automaker ferries vehicles to 20 destinations, serving over 450 cities using Indian railways. The next in-plant railway siding is in progress at the company's Manesar facility and will be operational soon, the automaker stated. *—PTI*

India Inc: Budget must offer tax relief to lift economy

Industries demand less corporate tax & more tax exemptions

Fin Min Sitharaman will present the Budget on 23 July PHOTO: ANI

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

The Union Budget FY25 should focus on offering relief to taxpayers, especially in the lower income brackets, to stimulate consumption, industry players suggested.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is scheduled to present the full Budget for fiscal 2024-25 on 23 July which will be the first major policy document of the new government.

The industry also urged the finance minister to lower corporate tax, phase out tax exemptions, and broaden tax base to boost economic growth.

"Rationalise and simplify the tax system to improve compliance and promote investment. Consider measures such as reducing corporate tax rates, phasing out tax exemptions, and broadening the tax base to make the tax regime more efficient and equitable," Assocham said.

Rating agency ICRA said the government is likely to set a fiscal deficit target at 4.9-5 per cent for FY25, as against 5.1 per cent estimated in the Interim Budget on February 1, without compromising the capital expenditure target of Rs 11.1 lakh crore.

"While favourable developments on the revenue front portend positively for the fiscal dynamics in FY2025, ICRA believes that fiscal consolidation will turn quite challenging beyond the current fiscal," the rating agency said.

Assocham has also suggested structural reforms in the agriculture sector to enhance productivity, market access, and opportunities for farmers.

It also suggested promoting contract farming, investing in agri-infrastructure, facilitating value chain integration, into high-value crops. *—PTI*

BUDGET SHOULD FOCUS ON FISCAL PRUDENCE, TAX BENEFITS: SBI

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

As the central government prepares for the upcoming budget on July 23rd, a research report by the State Bank of India (SBI) highlights crucial areas that need attention to drive sustainable economic growth and development in the country.

To provide relief in tax structures, the report advocates aligning personal income tax rates with corporate taxes and gradually transitioning all payers to the New Tax Regime. Additionally, it recommended considering tax parity for bank deposits to attract more savings and boost household financial savings.

With several key financial sector reforms brought in over the past decade -- including the Jan Dhan, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, Goods and Services Tax, push for platform business models, the government should now focus on decarbonisation, co-lending with NBFC, digital currency, ethical AI, among others.

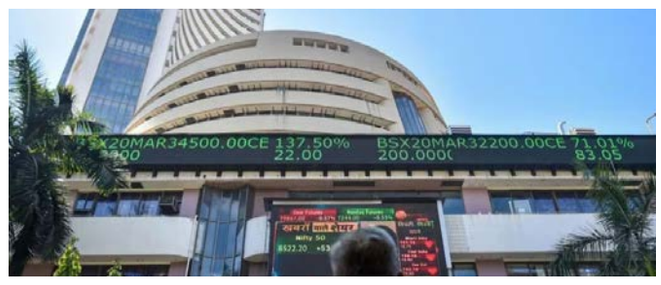
With this Budget Presentation, Sitharaman will surpass the record set by former Morarji Desai, who as finance minister, presented five annual budgets and one interim budget between 1959 and 1964. *— ANI*

EEPC urges revival of interest subvention scheme for exporters

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

The Engineering Export Promotion Council (EEPC India) has urged the government to revive the interest subvention scheme for exporters in its pre-budget recommendations. EEPC India said it represents nearly 9,500 member companies and the industry is a major contributor, accounting for 25 per cent of total exports. *—PTI*

AFTER BIG HIGHS



NSE Nifty dipped 3.30 points or 0.01 per cent to 24,320.5 PHOTO: PTI

Market settles on a flat note in muted trade

MUMBAI, 8 JULY

Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended flat on Monday in a lacklusture trade as investors opted to book profits after the recent record rally in equities.

Weak cues from Asian markets also added to the muted trend in domestic equities.

After beginning the trade on a weak note, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 36.22 points or 0.05 per cent to settle at 79,960.38. During the day, it went lower by 264.77 points or 0.33 per cent to 79,731.83.

The NSE Nifty dipped 3.30 points or 0.01 per cent to 24,320.55.

Among the Sensex pack, Titan, Adani Ports, Tata Steel, JSW Steel, UltraTech Cement, Asian Paints, Mahindra & Mahindra and Bajaj Finserv were the biggest laggards.

ITC, Hindustan Unilever, Nestle, HCL Technologies and Tata Motors were among the gainers.

- Among the Sensex pack, Titan, Adani Ports, Tata Steel, JSW Steel, UltraTech Cement, Asian Paints, Mahindra and Bajaj were biggest laggards

In a volatile session on Friday, the broader NSE Nifty continued its record-breaking run and inched up 21.70 points or 0.09 per cent to close at its lifetime high of 24,323.85. The BSE benchmark, however, dropped 53.07 points or 0.07 per cent to settle at 79,996.60.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.97 per cent to USD 85.70 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,241.33 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. *—PTI*

NEW PROJECTS INCOMING

Tata Realty bags ₹825 crore loan; global sales rise 2%

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Tata Realty on Monday said it has secured Rs 825 crore loan from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to refinance its green commercial project in Chennai.

Located strategically along Old Mahabalipuram Road (IT Expressway) in Taramani, Chennai, the 25.27-acre Ramanujan Intellion Park encompasses both a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) processing area and a non-processing zone.

The IT park includes the Taj Wellington Mews Hotel facility, which offers 112 serviced apartments and a 1,500-seater convention centre in the non-processing zone.

Tata had sold 3,22,159 motors in the April-June quarter PHOTO: X/@TATA

Tata Motors group global sales rise 2% in June quarter

Tata Motors on Monday reported a 2 per cent rise in total global sales to 3,29,847 units in the June quarter. The company had sold 3,22,159 units in the April-June quarter of FY24. Global wholesales of passenger vehicles were lower by 1 per cent year-on-year at 1,38,682 units in the first quarter as against a year ago, Tata Motors said in a statement. Jaguar Land Rover dispatches stood at 97,755 units in the April-June quarter, a growth of 5 per cent over the same period last fiscal.

During 2023-24, the company continued to undertake focused brand-building efforts and launched several products. TCPL said that central to the company's growth strategy was on focusing on the core businesses of tea, coffee and salt. *—PTI*

KOLKATA FEELS THE PINCH AS VEGGIE PRICES SOAR

KOLKATA, 8 JULY

Retail prices for vegetables, eggs, and poultry meat remain high in Kolkata markets, causing suffering for the common man.

Tomato prices have soared to Rs 80-100 per kg from Rs 45-50 a month ago, while Brinjal is selling for Rs 110-140 per kg, a jump of nearly 150 per cent from early June, greengrocers in several markets in the city said.

"Now Prices of several other vegetables such as bitter gourd, green chilli and bottle gourd have also increased by an average of 50 per cent. Egg and poultry meat prices have risen by 20-30 per, tomatoes in Bengal are coming from other states," a source in West Bengal Vendors Association told PTI. *—PTI*

'High public debt offers less space for welfare spending'

MUMBAI, 8 JULY

PHOTO: FREEPIK

India's high public debt offers limited fiscal space to undertake welfare measures which can help stimulate the economy, a foreign brokerage said on Monday.

In a report that comes weeks ahead of the presentation of the budget, Goldman Sachs said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman may continue on the fiscal consolidation roadmap, sticking to the 5.1 per cent fiscal deficit target announced in the interim budget.

It said investors are expecting from the budget some relaxation in fiscal consolidation path and a shift in focus to welfare spending from capital expenditure.

However, the same is not plausible, the brokerage hinted.

Even if there is "some expenditure allocation" towards welfare spending, it may not require a reduction in capex given the Rs 2.1 lakh crore dividend transfer from the Reserve Bank, it said.

Capex grew at a healthy 31 per cent between FY21-24, giving a boost to growth, it said. The brokerage said the upcoming budget may go beyond just fiscal numbers, and lay emphasis on job creation. *—PTI*

Foreign firms must adapt to Indian envt: TAITRA

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Amid the controversy surrounding Foxconn's hiring practices, Taiwanese trade promotion organisation TAITRA on Monday said that there could be some cultural issues but all foreign companies including Taiwanese firms operating in India need to adapt to the country's business environment.

His comment has come against the backdrop of media reports claiming that Taiwan-headquartered Foxconn, a contract manufacturer of Apple iPhones, is allegedly discriminating against married women by not hiring them to work at its unit in Tamil Nadu.

Rejecting the reports, Foxconn last month purportedly informed the government that 25 per cent of its new hires are married women and its safety protocol, which requires all employees to avoid wearing metal irrespective of gender or religion, is not discriminatory.

PHOTO: ANI

Refusing to be drawn into controversy regarding Foxconn's hiring practices, Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA) Chairman James C F Huang emphasised that every Taiwanese company comes to India with good faith. *—PTI*

L&T BAGS SOLAR POWER PROJECTS IN MIDDLE EAST

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Larsen & Toubro on Monday said its renewable energy arm has bagged two orders from a leading developer in the Middle East to build two Gigawatt scaleSolar PV plants.

"The renewable arm of Larsen & Toubro (L&T) has finalised mega orders with a leading developer in the Middle East to build two Gigawatt scale Solar PV plants," the company said in a regulatory filing. L&T did not reveal the financial details of the contract, but as per its project classification, the value of a mega order ranges between Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000 crore.

The scope of the orders also includes grid interconnections encompassing pooling substations and overhead transmission lines. *—PTI*

MobiKwik claims to be largest wallet player

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

MobiKwik on Monday said it has become the largest digital financial services platform in terms of PPI Wallet transactions by value for April and May.

Quoting Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, MobiKwik said it has gained its market share in financial transactions through the Prepaid Payment Instrument (PPI) Wallet during the two months.

The company saw its market share by value grow from 11 per cent in March 2024 to 20 per cent in April and further to 23 per cent in May.

According to MobiKwik Co-founder & CFO Upasana Taku, the new product Pocket UPI has played a significant role in expanding its reach and bringing ease of payment to the users.

Pocket UPI offers users a seamless way to make instant payments through their Wallets across the UPI network without linking their bank account, further helping users manage their finances effectively.

"MobiKwik is not in the business of FASTag issuance. MobiKwik commanded a 48 per cent market share for PPI Wallet transactions by value in May 2024, after excluding FASTag-related transaction value," she told PTI. *—PTI*

DIAMOND POWER BAGS ADANI'S ORDER OF ₹409 CR

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Diamond Power Infrastructure on Monday said that it has secured an order worth Rs 409 crore for supply of cables to Adani Green Energy. "Our company has received a letter of intent from Adani Green Energy Ltd worth Rs 409 crore (inclusive GST) for supply for various LV/MV cables," a BSE filing said. According to the filing, the supply order has to be completed by December 2024. None of the promoter/promoter group/group companies have any interest in the entity, Diamond Power said, adding the work doesn't fall under party transactions. *—PTI*

Torrent to set up solar projects

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Torrent Power's subsidiary Torrent Urja 14 (TU14) will set up solar projects of up to 50 MW to supply clean power to ARS Steels & Alloy International (ARS), a BSE filing said on Monday.

As per the Subscription and Shareholders' Agreement (SSSA) signed on Monday, ARS will also have an equity stake in the TU14 -- an arm of Torrent Power.

The SSSA has been signed by Torrent Power, ARS and TU14 for the supply of power from by development of up to 50 MWp solar power generating projects in Tamil Nadu through open access from the

PHOTO: FREEPIK

project of TU14 to the production units of ARS," the filing said.

"Significant terms of SSSA include that ARS shall at all times during the subsistence of the power supply and offtake agreement hold not less than 26 per cent of the aggregate equity shares of TU14," Torrent Power said.

. *—PTI*

ON CPGRAMS PORTAL

Govt resolves 50% of pension grievances

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

The central government portal of public grievances has resolved 69,166 grievances during the first 15 days of June, said the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions on Monday.

The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) has released a list of grievances redressed for the first 15 days of June 2024.

The DARPG has received a total of 1,35,642 grievances related to various issues in the first 15 days of June out of which the department has disposed of 69074 grievances and 66,568 grievances are pending.

- DARPG has received a total of 1,35,642 grievances related to various issue, which the department has disposed of 69074 grievances

The department has also released a list of the top 5 Ministries/Departments in terms of numbers of Grievance Redressal it includes the Department of Rural Development which disposed of 21614 grievances, Ministry of Labour and Employment solved 7324 grievances, Department of Financial Services (Banking Division) have disposed of 6206 grievances, Central Board of Direct Taxes (Income Tax) solved 2890 and Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) solved 2296 grievances. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

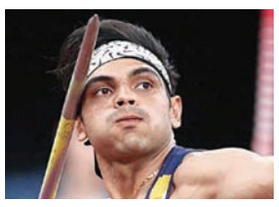


PHOTO: PTI

Neeraj will play in Paris Olympics, confirms AFI

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) president, Adille J Sumariwalla, said on Monday that Olympic and World champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra has a niggling injury in his abductor muscle, but he is training well and absolutely good to go and perform at Paris 2024 Olympics, starting from 26 July onwards.

Sumariwalla was speaking at a special event on 'India's Preparation for Paris 2024' at the Alliance francaise de Delhi, organised by the Indo-French Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IFCCI). Speaking to ANI, Adille said about Neeraj's injury woes ahead of Paris 2024, "He always had a back strap. His injury is not in the back. He had a niggling feeling in his abductor muscle in the leg which is his top leg." *—ANI*

Men's hockey team leaves for Switzerland

BENGALURU, 8 JULY

The Indian men's hockey team on Monday departed for renowned adventurer Mike Horn's base in Switzerland which will be followed by a training camp in the Netherlands ahead of the Paris Games. The three-day arduous camp in Switzerland is designed to instill mental toughness and from there the Indian team will head to the Netherlands to play practice matches before finally heading to the French capital. Skipper Harmanpreet Singh said the upcoming experiences will ensure that the players are "in the best state of mind and body before we begin our Olympic journey." "We just completed a two-week camp in SAI Bengaluru and after a short detour in Switzerland with Mike Horn, the Team will play some practice matches against the Netherlands and Malaysia." *—PTI*

After 5 yrs Spanish keeper Adrain leaves Liverpool

LIVERPOOL, 8 JULY

Premier League club Liverpool confirmed the departure of Spanish goalkeeper Adrian after his contract expired. Adrian spent five years with Liverpool and made 26 appearances for the Reds. He played a key role in Liverpool's penalty shootout victory over Chelsea in the UEFA Super Cup in 2019. The club released an official statement to announce the departure of the experienced Spanish goalkeeper, "Adrian departs Liverpool this summer having made a valuable contribution to the club's successes across his five years at Anfield. A popular figure among teammates and staff alike, Adrian leaves the Reds with the best wishes of everybody at the club. Thank you for everything." *—ANI*

Ashwin buys team in Global Chess League

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has become a co-owner of the American Gambits, a new team which will feature in the second edition of the Global Chess League, a joint venture between Tech Mahindra and the International Chess Federation. The League on Monday unveiled the six franchises for the second edition to be played in London from 3 to 12 October. American Gambits, owned by prominent business leaders Prachura PP, Venkat K Narayana and Ashwin, will replace Chingari Gulf Titans. "We're thrilled to introduce the American Gambits to the chess world. With a blend of strategic brilliance and unwavering determination, our team aims to redefine the game. As co-owner, I'm excited to witness their journey," Ashwin was quoted as saying. *—PTI*

Alcaraz, Sinner reach Wimbledon quarterfinals

Elena Rybakina into last eight; Coco Gauff loses

LONDON, 8 JULY

There Carlos Alcaraz was, down on his backside at a baseline below the Royal Box, briefly taking a seat in the grass after doing the splits when he slipped while running to hit a forehand during his fourth-round match.

So now what? Give up on the point and get ready for the next? Ha. Not this kid. Alcaraz popped to his feet, sprinted to his left to get to a backhand wide of the doubles alley, then raced forward to reach a short shot and, eventually, watched his opponent send a volley long.

That allowed Alcaraz to claim the second set of what would become a 6-3, 6-4, 1-6, 7-5 victory against No. 16 seed Ugo Humbert at Centre Court. The defending champion at the All England Club celebrated the moment by raising his right index finger in a "No. 1" gesture and shouting "Vamos!" as thousands of spectators rose to salute him.

Asked during his on-court interview how he'd describe the remarkable sequence against Humbert, Alcaraz offered a huge smile and

Jannik Sinner and Elena Rybakina celebrate their winning shots

PHOTO: X/@WIMBLEDON

responded: "Unbelievable, I guess. I just try to fight every point, every ball. It doesn't matter what part of the court."

There is a possible rematch against the No. 1-ranked Sinner looming in the semifinals. Each just needs to win once more to get there. In Tuesday's quarterfinals, Alcaraz will face No. 12 Tommy Paul, and Sinner goes up against 2021 U.S. Open champion Daniil Medvedev.

Sinner was bounced in last year's Wimbledon semifinals by Novak Djokovic, who then lost to Alcaraz in a five-set final.

Sinner earned his first Grand Slam title at the Australian Open in January, and he advanced Sunday with a 6-2, 6-4, 7-6 (9) win against No. 14 Ben Shelton, breaking the big-serving left-hander four times — the same total number of breaks others had managed against the 21-year-old American through 15 sets entering the day.

Paolini next meets No. 19 Emma Navarro, who defeated reigning U.S. Open champion Coco Gauff 6-4, 6-3 in the day's last match. The second-seeded Gauff's exit comes the day after No. 1 Iga Swiatek lost and leaves just two of the top 10 seeded women in the bracket: No. 4 Elena Rybakina, the 2022 champion, and No. 7 Paolini.

Elena Rybakina underlined why she is the new favourite to lift the Wimbledon title with a dominant performance against Anna Kalinskaya under the roof on Centre Court before her opponent retired injured. *—AP*

India are trailing the three-match series 0-1 after losing the opener by 12 runs

PHOTO: PTI

T20I: India Women eye series win against S Africa

CHENNAI, 8 JULY

Desperate to level the three-match series after the second game was washed out, India would hope weather doesn't play spoilsport, besides eyeing a much-improved bowling effort in the final women's T20I against South Africa here on Tuesday.

India are trailing the three-match series 0-1 after losing the opener by 12 runs. Their problems compounded after the second game here on Sunday was washed out midway due to persistent drizzle.

And with 30 to 40 per cent of rain forecast for Tuesday, the Indians are left on the mercy of weather gods. In both the matches, the Indian bowlers cut a sorry figure as South Africa amassed 189 for 9 and 177 for 6 respectively.

Barring Pooja Vastrakar, who picked up two wickets each in both the games, and spinner Deepti Sharma, most of the Indian bowlers failed to shine against the Proteas women. Renuka Singh leaked runs in the first game and was subsequently replaced by Sajeevan Sajana in the second T20I but the latter also didn't her cause.

Shreyanka Patil and Radha Yadav picked up a wicket each on Sunday but continued to leak runs.

India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur would want her bowlers to pull up their socks with the series at stake. On the batting front, it has been a decent show by the Indians in the first game. The likes of Jemimah Rodrigues (53 not out), Smriti Mandhana (46), Harmanpreet (35), Shafali Verma (18) and Daylan Hemalatha (14) all making double digit scores.

Uma Chetry, who made her T20I debut on Sunday, is likely to persisted with as Harmanpreet and the team management would like to see her exploits with the bat.

—PTI

It's Spain vs France: Fight for final spot in Euro cup

MUNICH, 8 JULY

Spain and France meet in the semifinals of the European Championship on Tuesday. The match pits one of the highest-scoring teams at the tournament against one of the lowest as France's star forward Kylian Mbappé has struggled to get to grips with his mask. Kickoff is at 9pm local time (1900 GMT) in Munich.

The winner will play England or Netherlands in the final on Sunday in Berlin. Their semifinal is on Wednesday. Mbappé, who will be facing several of his new Real Madrid teammates, will again be wearing a protective mask after sustaining a broken nose in France's group opener against Austria.

Spain, which is chasing a record fourth European Championship title, has been perfect in Germany. It was the only team to win all its group stage matches, while France could only muster draws

The winner will play England or Netherlands in the final on Sunday in Berlin

PHOTO: X/@SEFUTBOL

against Poland and the Netherlands after a narrow win over Austria.

Spain paid the price for its dramatic win over Germany and a number of players will miss the semifinal — and in some cases the final should La Roja get there — because of suspension or injury.

Spain and France have only conceded three goals between them. The teams have met 36 times, with Spain winning 16 to France's 13 including five of the past eight. France has reached the final in three of last four major tournaments, losing 1-0 after extra time to Portugal at Euro 2016 and to Argentina on penalties in the 2022 World Cup, but beating Croatia to claim its second world title in 2018. *—PTI*

India hopes to beat Myanmar in int'l women's friendlies

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

India will aim for a first win against Myanmar when they renew their rivalry against their higher-ranked neighbours in two away women's football friendlies beginning at the Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon, Myanmar on Tuesday.

The 67th ranked Indians are winless in all five of their meetings with Myanmar (WR 54), losing four and drawing once. But it's been five years since they faced Myanmar with the last one being a 3-3 in the AFC Women's Olympic Qualifiers in Mandalay in 2019. Sandhiya Ranganathan, Sanju and Nongmaithem Ratanbala Devi, all of them part of the current squad as well, scored in that fixture. Prior to that, India suffered defeats on each of the four occasions at the AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers (2013), AFC Women's Olympic Qualifiers (2015, 2018) and the Gold Cup (2019). *—PTI*

JAYASURIYA TO LEAD SL AS HEAD COACH AGAINST TEAM INDIA SERIES

COLOMBO, 8 JULY

Former captain Sanath Jayasuriya on Monday was named the interim head coach of Sri Lanka's cricket team ahead of this month's white-ball home series against India with the country's board saying that he is "well-positioned" to guide the side till a "permanent solution" is found in the next few months. The Indian team will be touring Sri Lanka for three T20 Internationals and as many ODIs, starting 27 July. Jayasuriya, who has also served as a chief selector in the past, will continue in the post till Sri Lanka's Test tour to England in August-September, comprising three games. *—PTI*

AIIF Prez refutes claims on Stimac contract extension

NEW DELHI, 8 JULY

Former AIFF Secretary General Shaji Prabhakaran on Monday claimed that the contract extension signed with the former national head coach Igor Stimac which did not have a severance clause, was "approved" by President Kalyan Chaubey who, however, termed the assertion as a "complete lie".

In a letter written to AIFF executive committee members of associations, Prabhakaran said "the contract was signed only when Chaubey approved the same".

Prabhakaran's assertion came a few days before the AIFF's EC meeting on 20 July, which will discuss the implications of the sacking of Stimac last month.

Shaji Prabhakaran PHOTO: PTI

With heading 'A contract clause that Kalyan Chaubey approved first and denied later', Prabhakaran said, "Chaubey, contrary to his claims, was updated at each step, and the contract was signed only when he approved the same. Delhi High Court initially stayed his ouster but later gave AIFF EC the liberty to sack him. The case is till spending and coming up for hearing later this month.—*PTI*

Sharath Kamal says his best is yet to come

CHENNAI, 8 JULY

- The 41-year-old turned the clock back to win three gold medals, including one in men's singles, at Birmingham Commonwealth Games

Set for his fifth Olympic appearance in Paris, Indian flagbearer Achanta Sharath Kamal feels he is scaling new heights with each passing year and believes his "best is yet to come."

The 41-year-old turned the clock back to win three gold medals, including one in men's singles, at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games in 2022. He returned empty-handed at last year's Asian Games in Hangzhou, but Sharath helped Indian men's team clinch a historic Paris Olympics quota via world rankings following their last-16 finish at the World Table Tennis Championships in Busan in February.

"I am happy that I'm scaling new heights with each passing year, besides improving both physically and mentally. I hope the best is yet to come," the top-ranked Indian told PTI.

"To highlight one particular achievement from my career would not do justice to my other achievements. The Asian Games bronze (Jakarta 2018) and Commonwealth Games gold are two of the highs of my career," said the Sharath, who boasts of 13 CWG medals in his cabinet. "I'm pretty sure I haven't left any stone unturned. I have done everything possible from my side, and I hope the results will follow," said Sharath. *—PTI*

PARIS OLYMPICS

Indian flagbearer Achanta Sharath Kamal PHOTO: PTI

MOTO GP

Marini leads Hondas home in Germany

HOHENSTEIN-ERNSTTHAL, 8 JULY

Continued improvements saw Luca Marini set the pace for the Honda RC213V riders in the Sprint race, taking his best result of the year so far. Joan Mir takes learnings into Sunday.

A weekend of positivity continued for Luca Marini, the #10 getting faster with every session and able to not only stay with the other Hondas but frequently set the pace of the quintet. Taking 18th in Qualifying, his best grid position of the year, the Italian was primed for a strong Sprint race.

Leading Zarco almost immediately, Marini would comfortably finish the 15 laps in 15th and as the top Honda. It's been a confidence-boosting start to the weekend for the newest Honda recruit, able to banish the bad luck of Assen and get back on course. The goal for Sunday is clear: continue this trajectory.

From 20th on the grid, Mir finished in 21st after a complicated Sprint

PHOTO: X/@HRC_MOTOGP

It was not such a straightforward day for Joan Mir whose troubles continued. Able to find only marginal gains on his Repsol Honda Team machine, the double World Champion was left frustrated with the lack of feeling and speed. From 20th on the grid, Mir finished in 21st after a complicated Sprint. Setup experimentation combined with the hot conditions of Saturday did not help the #36 to change his fortunes, but there's still time for overnight improvements.

Both Repsol Honda Team riders are focusing on the further positives to come from Sunday's race. 30-laps around the tight and technical Sachsenring is always a demanding affair and could produce very different results to the Sprint. *—ANI*

Bumrah calls T20 WC fete a dream come true

AHMEDABAD, 8 JULY

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah expressed happiness at India winning the (ICC) T20 World Cup and the celebrations since then, saying that he has been "living a dream".

Taking to Instagram, Bumrah said, "I am so thankful for the last few days. I've been living a dream and it has filled me with happiness and gratitude."

India ended their 11-year-long ICC trophy drought as Virat Kohli (76), Hardik Pandya (3/20) and Jasprit Bumrah (2/18) starred in Men in Blue's seven-run win over South Africa in the final at Barbados on 29 June. Virat's masterclass knock helped India reach 176/7 in 20 overs, while Bumrah and Pandya unleashed a pace choke on Proteas, snatching the match from a losing position to restrict Proteas to 169/8 in their 20 overs.

Bumrah earned the 'Player of the Tournament' award PHOTO: PTI

Bumrah earned the 'Player of the Tournament' award thanks to his crucial spells throughout the tournament, taking 15 wickets in eight matches at an average of 11.86 and an economy rate of 4.17, with the best bowling figures of 3/7. *—ANI*